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The Politics of Race in Britain and South Africa

Black British Solidarity and the
Anti-Apartheid Struggle



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ABBREVIATIONS

AAM	Anti-Apartheid Movement
A-APRP	All African People's Revolutionary Party
A-ASC	All-African Students' Conferences
AGM	Annual General Meeting
ALD	African Liberation Day
ANC	African National Congress
APLA	Azanian People's Liberation Army
ARA	Anti-Racist Alliance
AZAPO	Azanian People's Organisation
BALSA	Black Action for the Liberation of South Africa
BC/BCM	Black Consciousness Movement
BEM	Black and Ethnic Minority Committee
BL	Black Liberation
BP	British Petroleum
BPC	Black People's Convention
BPM	Black Parents Movement
BSC	Black Solidarity Committee
BYM	Black Youth Movement
CAO	Committee of African Organisations
CARD	Campaign Against Racial Discrimination
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
COD	Congress of Democrats
CODESA	Convention for a Democratic South Africa
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
CRE	Commission of Racial Equality

EEC	European Economic Community
ELTSA	End Loans to South Africa
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
FLN	Algerian Liberation Movement
FRELIMO	The Liberation Front of Mozambique
GEC	General Electric Company plc
GHAPSO	Ghana People's Solidarity Organisation
IASB	International African Service Bureau
ICFTU	International Confederation of Free Trade Union
ICI	Imperial Chemical Industries
ICU	Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union
IFP	Inkatha Freedom Party
IRA	Irish Republican Army
KANU	Kenyan African National Union
LCP	League of Coloured Peoples
LPBS	Labour Party Black Sections
MCF	Movement for Colonial Freedom
MDM	Mass Democratic Movement
MK	Umkhonto we Sizwe
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NCCAL	National Coordinating Committee for African Liberation
NCCL	National Council for Civil Liberties
NF	National Forum
NUSAS	National Union of South African Students
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
PAC	Pan Africanist Congress
PAM	Pan-Africanist Movement
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organisation
PNC	People's National Council
PNP	People's National Party
PPP	People's Progressive Party
RAAS	Racial Action Adjustment Society
RTZ	Rio Tinto Zinc Corporation
SACP	South African Communist Party
SAFA	South African Freedom Association
SAIC	South African Indian Congress
SASO	South African Student Organisation

SNCC	Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee
SPG	Special Patrol Group
SWANC	South West African National Congress
SWAPO	South West African People's Organisation
TANU	Tanganyika African National Union
TRG	Tory Reform Group
TUC	Trade Union Congress
UDF	United Democratic Front
UN	United Nations
UNA	Universal Negro Improvement Organisation
UNIP	United National Independence Party of Northern Rhodesia
WASU	West African Students' Union
WISC	West Indian Standing Conference
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African People's Union

INTRODUCTION

This book examines the solidarity of black British communities in Britain with the people of South Africa who opposed apartheid. It also explores the issues that influenced their interactions in this endeavour with other groups, in particular the British Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAM), which was widely regarded as the 'official' anti-apartheid organisation in Britain. Ironically, in a struggle against a racist state in South Africa, relations between black and white activists in Britain were not without tension. The chapters uncover the areas of conflict that inhibited stronger collaboration between black activists engaged in domestic anti-racist struggles and the mainly white members of the AAM. Chapters assess the contribution of black groups that chose to show solidarity and support with the South African liberation movement independently of AAM links precisely because of these tensions. They will bring into central focus the often hidden contribution of black Britons to both domestic and international affairs.

The second and third generation of black Britons who came of age during the 1980s emerged from a postwar community of migrants who arrived in Britain from the late 1940s onwards. They were, however, the tail-end of a longer black presence in Britain that can be traced back to Roman times but more notably from the Elizabethan era.¹ Aside from the tiny black communities in Britain that had grown up around the port cities and towns, in the early twentieth century the main ethnic composition of black residents in Britain tended to be African, African-Caribbean or African-American; aside from the established working-class communities, a small number were students and intellectuals.

Among the self-help groups and forums of debate formed by these intellectuals, particularly the Pan-African conferences that commenced in London from the early 1900s, blacks residing in British cities publicly called for racial justice, equity and political freedom for African peoples fighting against racial discrimination in South Africa.

The extreme nature of racial domination in South Africa under segregation and then apartheid galvanised Africans elsewhere in the African continent and those in the diaspora to protest. In Britain, African students who had experienced racial prejudice became involved in anti-colonial politics and called for racial equality at home and abroad. It was from this foundation of anti-racist activity that the Boycott Movement emerged. In December 1958, at the All-African People's Conference in Accra, an agreement was reached by participants to boycott South African goods. In April of the following year, the African National Congress (ANC) launched a boycott in South Africa against businesses that supported apartheid. This stance was supported by the South African Indian Congress (SAIC), the South African Coloured People's Association, the South African Congress of Trade Unions and the Liberal Party. In Britain in the same year, the Boycott Movement was formed in response to the call of the ANC, under the leadership of its president, Chief Albert Luthuli, to galvanise an international boycott of South African goods.²

In Britain, early African involvement in anti-apartheid activity waned as the character of the black community changed with the influx of West Indian migrants whose priorities were to settle and assimilate into British society. At the same time, many of the African and African-Caribbean students who were active in anti-colonial politics left Britain to return to newly independent countries to take up leadership positions in public life and government. A new generation of black communities became radicalised through the domestic racial struggles of the 1960s, 1970s and early 1980s. During these years comparisons were made between their struggles and those of other black and brown-skinned peoples abroad. Furthermore some black groups expressed unease over the role of whites in the British anti-apartheid struggle. The following chapters analyse the tensions and challenges that black and white activists sought to overcome in their shared desire to precipitate the demise of apartheid. The AAM's role in awakening the public to the realities of life lived under apartheid will also be discussed. Throughout

the apartheid years between 1948 and 1994, the South African government continued to use the full force of the state apparatus to entrench racial disadvantage while suppressing and attempting to destroy its anti-apartheid opponents. This book brings together in a single frame the perspectives, rhetoric and political activity of British government ministers, anti-apartheid activists and grass-roots black activists. It stands as a corrective to the tendency to oversimplify and portray the AAM as an all-inclusive harmonious entity, the juggernaut of a righteous moral force that sought to discredit the apartheid state. It adds depth to our understanding of the anti-racist struggle and the politics of race in Britain during the 1980s.

Setting the British domestic scene

In Britain, for black youths who came of age in the late 1970s and in the 1980s, and who found themselves marginalised within British society where they faced discrimination and criminalisation, expressions of African solidarity, identity and belonging became integral to their politics of black resistance.³ The result was a bold anti-racism and political activity that emanated from a grass-roots level, where community mobilisation against racism and racial disadvantage fed into a black consciousness that was global as much as local and national. It was a consciousness informed by Pan-Africanism, the Civil Rights Movement and Black Power Movement of the Americas, and the anti-apartheid struggle of South Africans. From the early 1980s, racial strife in Britain began to take centre stage with the Bristol riots in 1980. This radicalising process fed into the anger that soon exploded across Britain's black communities and into the consciousness of white Britain as major British cities were engulfed by violent unrest. In the aftermath there was the recognition that this generation of black Britons would take their fight to the urban citadels of the nation if provoked. Moreover, black Britons strongly identified with the struggles of Africans in South Africa. The 1980s proved to be a turning point in the internationalisation of the anti-apartheid struggle, the sense of urgency to bring apartheid to an end intensified. Meanwhile in Britain it was a decade when many black youths in deprived urban areas found themselves demonised by the press. They struggled against the education system, the police and the judiciary. These authorities were considered symbols

of oppression, and parallels were drawn with black youth fighting against white authority in South Africa. In Britain, the black youth expression of anger and frustration that led to spontaneous outbursts of violence against the police force and public property was a reaction to years of government cuts to the funding of socio-economic programmes in the deprived neighbourhoods where they lived, underinvestment, urban decline and substandard housing, with the resultant high crime rate and high unemployment. This coupled with systemic racial discrimination and rough policing methods, most notably the aggressive stop-and-search operations targeted at black youth, left many in the community resentful and embittered.

The explosion of rioting – or ‘uprisings’ as many preferred to call these clashes – in St Paul’s in Bristol in 1980; Brixton, Southall and Totexth in 1981; Brixton, Handsworth and Tottenham in 1985 – alerted the whole country to the deep racial divisions in British society. Furthermore, the politics of racial conflict in South Africa were brought into the British domestic political frame when the South African President, P.W. Botha, was invited by the British government to Downing Street and to the Prime Minister’s private residence at Chequers in 1984. Large-scale protests, which were largely organised by the AAM, attracted thousands onto the streets.⁴ Conservative politicians argued that the visit was a means of rewarding what they saw as Botha’s evolutionary domestic reforms in the tricameral parliament, which had introduced three separate racialised chambers and brought limited political participation to Indians and coloured people. However, as Chapter 5 will show, members of the black community felt especially insulted at Botha’s visit, and viewed his presence as a visible symbol of the arrogance of white power.

From 1985, as the internal strife in South Africa intensified due to the imposition of the continuous state of emergency, strikes and unrest around the country, South African politics became uniquely part of the political landscape of Britain in a way that no other country had done since perhaps the Biafran civil war in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Popular antagonism towards the South African government was largely fuelled by the media. In the mid-1980s, over a period of months, there were almost daily reports in newspapers, on television and radio of the violent clashes between the South African police and army against anti-government protesters in the townships. The journalist Paul Johnson

noted the dramatic impact of these visual images on British households when he commented: 'Television is a gigantic magnifying glass which focuses and concentrates the spark of violence and conjures it into a fire.'⁵ The domestic issues affecting South Africa were further established in the British popular imagination through music and the countrywide hits of singles such as 'Free Nelson Mandela', which made it into the top ten of the music charts.⁶ Major Hollywood films such as *Cry Freedom* and *A World Apart*,⁷ which came out on general release in 1987 and 1988 respectively, highlighted the anti-apartheid message, although the AAM received probably no greater boost than Nelson Mandela's 70th birthday concert at Wembley in 1988, in which a significant number of black British bands took part.⁸ These events complemented the rising consciousness against racism in Britain. In 1987 criticisms about the lack of representation of ethnic minorities in the British political system were partly quelled with the historic entry into Parliament by three black and one Asian member. Nevertheless, in the minds of many black Britons the struggles in South Africa of Africans against their white rulers mirrored their own experience of living in 'Babylon'⁹ and their own struggles against the systemic racism of Britain. This became conflated into a sense of the universal struggle of black people against white oppression, which black communities saw as dating back to the beginning of the Atlantic slave trade driven largely by European avarice.

In framing the domestic political context in which anti-apartheid activity was conducted, the position taken by the British government in its dialogue with the South African government during the 1980s also merits attention. There is a well-developed body of literature charting Britain's official relationship with the apartheid government and the British government's ambiguous attitude towards the South African government.¹⁰ For example, Arianna Lissoni and Roger Fieldhouse have demonstrated how successive British governments tried to maintain Britain's 'special interests' in South Africa while not publicly condoning apartheid.¹¹ By examining contemporary documents of government departments and evidence from internal confidential memos, reports and minuted discussions, they showed that Conservative and Labour governments privately discussed how to avoid causing offence to African members of the Commonwealth, while at the same time not alienating or antagonising Pretoria.¹² The British government was concerned

about the reaction of African states towards its position on South Africa. Awareness of its colonial past and continued economic links with the independent African states made it vulnerable to any retaliatory action from African nations resentful of British support towards the South African government. This dual strategy was not without pitfalls and was frequently undermined by the government's voting behaviour at the United Nations Security Council when, from the 1950s, the matter of apartheid and sanctions was raised. At the UN, Britain's failure to vote for sanctions against South Africa displeased the African and Caribbean Commonwealth countries, while Pretoria felt the British government did not give it enough support. The behaviour of the British government was shaped by the desire to maintain stability in the region and throughout Africa. Commenting on the government's position, Lissoni writes,

British policy accordingly had to balance Britain's short against her long-term interests. Britain's economic stake, strategic interests, and her position in the High Commission Territories meant that she could not afford to break off relations with South Africa. At the same time, Britain should try not to convey the impression that her 'association with Dr Verwoerd's Government is particularly warm or close' because of the harmful consequences it would have on black African opinion and the possibility that, in a not too distant future, political power might pass to the African majority of the population.¹³

Indeed this was the rationale that underpinned British government action for the next 40 years. By the commencement of Mrs Thatcher's government in 1979, concern for African sensitivities and the fear of hostile reactions from African states towards British support of Pretoria had diminished. Furthermore, changes in the geopolitical climate brought politicians to the realisation that Britain's international prestige could no longer be predicated on its dominance of one-quarter of the world's globe, even in the slimmed-down version of the Commonwealth. For policy makers, Britain's future and vital interest lay within the European and North Atlantic alliance system.¹⁴ After independence during the 1960s, the domestic and regional problems of African states weakened their potential influence over their

European allies. Due to national instability, African states had little political and economic leverage when it came to dealing with the more powerful states of the West. Instead, the relationship was characterised by increasing dependency by the South on the North. Countries in the South were in continual need of economic and military aid in a world demarcated by the ideological and geopolitical dynamics of cold war competition.¹⁵ Britain steered a largely independent course when it came to matters judged to be in its national interest. Mrs Thatcher when it came to South Africa pursued such an approach in a characteristically head-strong manner.

Methodology and sources

Research for this book relied extensively on documentary sources and information extracted from in-depth interviews with individuals who engaged in anti-apartheid activism or were a part of the British political establishment dealing with South Africa. The narratives of these individuals enriched and added colour and clarity to the information available in the documentary sources.

Despite acknowledged limitations of personal interviews, the fact that the end of apartheid remains in living memory presented the opportunity to approach a plethora of individuals, which brought the author into contact with figures from the arenas of politics, journalism, academia, social and community activism, and music. From their reminiscences, the interviewees demonstrated the way in which the events in South Africa touched the political consciousness and activities of strangers thousands of miles away. It is arguable that the decade of the 1980s, more than previous years, with its searing and intrusive media coverage of the urban warfare unfolding in South Africa, sharpened the international spectator's visual and emotional sensitivities in a way that demanded a visceral identification with those presented as the oppressed. This in turn intensified the global pariah status of the South African state. Information provided by participants and observers alike was voluminous. Some individuals requested anonymity due to their perception of still present sensitivities around the subject matter; nevertheless, their subjective insights and descriptions of the challenges faced during the period under study have informed the content of the following chapters.

The use of official and unofficial contemporary documents alongside interview material provides a complex picture of the range of opinions and actions undertaken in the attempt to react to the challenges that South Africa presented to its supporters and detractors. In using extracts from the political pamphlets and ephemera from black activist groups, the AAM and other relevant sources, it became necessary to consider the message beyond what was presented at face value. Often the messages transmitted via these sources were statements of ideals used for persuasive and propagandistic effect to galvanise the target audience. The language and tone was tailored to the intended audience and the authors no doubt profoundly believed in the justice of their arguments and sought to shift official and public opinion.

The limitations of these sources lie in the subjectivity of the content that the researcher often has to consider when interpreting the actions of the protagonists. At times it was difficult to ascertain the extent to which these appeals resonated with the consciousness and aspiration of the people in the street as opposed to the activists who utilised various forms of rhetoric to appeal to British values of fairness and morality, or black solidarity – as they interpreted it to mean. Furthermore, one cannot assess these expressions in print uncritically, nor the motives and responses of groups of people to the propaganda, pamphlets and rhetoric deployed by leaders and activists. The impact of these forays into the public consciousness can be gauged from the numbers of individuals who attended particular events and the public response to campaigns, although in too many cases these details were not meticulously measured. The popularity of songs with an anti-apartheid protest theme often demonstrated the internationalisation of the racial politics of South Africa. Although analysis of the mainstream and black media representation of these issues is not within the immediate remit of this book, it is clear to see that commentators in the media often reflected the controversies that infused the dialogue between protagonists.¹⁶ The issue of apartheid was highly emotive and it remains so in post-apartheid South Africa. There was little room for ambivalence and individuals often held fixed opinions. With factors of the national interest to be taken into consideration, and kinship ties to take into account, alongside the artificially constructed system of racial disadvantage, no one wanted to be seen as in any way condoning the unpalatable aspects of apartheid.

Documentary sources such as AAM memoranda or government papers tended to convey the sense of strongly defended fixed positions taken by both sides. Political memoirs amounted to justifications of past actions and there are only rare cases of introspection and reflection on how the individual might have acted otherwise. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the former Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, did not acknowledge in her memoirs any flaws in her approach to South Africa and the issue of sanctions. The reports and memoranda of the AAM and numerous letters between the AAM and government departments often demonstrated the brittle relationship between the two sides. However, without these sources, the story of anti-apartheid activity in Britain would be devoid of the challenges faced by those determined that apartheid should be removed without eruption into civil war.

In researching this book, besides interviewing recognisable names, a significant selection of activists who were interviewed belonged to what Alessandro Portelli describes as the 'non-hegemonic classes'.¹⁷ The content of these interviews encourage us to pay greater attention to marginalised groups in society and their contribution to political activism. The opinions expressed and extrapolated from these interviews gives space to individuals hitherto absent from the historical record. This focus foregrounds the socio-political histories of individuals and their actions, which they themselves perceived as being indivisible from and complementary to the global anti-racist struggles of the late twentieth century. Where there was a lack of documentary evidence or gaps in the existing record, the advantage of employing the interview as a way to fill these gaps proved to be useful, although this information had to be handled critically. The immediate challenge was in gaining access to individuals that are absent from the documentary record. For instance, when exploring the role of the black membership in the AAM, by looking at annual reports and committee minutes the contribution of black activists seemed non-existent or sporadic until the foundation of the Black and Ethnic Minority Committee (BEM) in the late 1980s. This group seemed to be the only source of anti-apartheid activity in the black community until 'hidden' networks of activity were revealed through interviews with members of the BEM and other individuals who had no connection with the AAM. In some cases, for the first time, one encounters the political attitudes of unknown activists, their politicisation, social backgrounds and political networks. For many

politically engaged black Britons, their anti-apartheid activism was often subsumed within local and national anti-racist campaigns. Therefore, it did not always have the exclusive focus, nor the detailed and unbroken longevity of documentation found in the tightly structured and focused activity of the AAM. This meant that the interviews provided not only information about anti-apartheid activity among black activists and the wider black community, but also highlighted the broader context of their struggles and perspectives on racism at home and abroad.

However, it is important to remember that all historical sources, whether documentary or oral, are subject to the same influences of selectivity, interpretation and partiality. Each interview was simply one individual's selective account of a complex series of events, but a general picture can be traced, and repetitive themes from a variety of people added a sense of legitimacy and authenticity to their words. The strength of this narrative is not only in the documentary evidence it draws upon but also the information gleaned from those prepared to share their narratives of those times.

Note on terminology

In this book the terms West Indian/African-Caribbean and black British, will be used to describe people of African descent who migrated from the English-speaking Caribbean and Guyana, South America, from the late 1940s. Forty years later, the black community comprised the second- and third-generation descendants of these migrants who identified with the cultural Caribbean roots of their parents and looked to Africa for spiritual and cultural values and their sense of history. They simultaneously asserted their black British identity and their rights as citizens in Britain. It is important to note that in the period under focus, the tailing off of West Indian migration was superseded by African migrants and people of Asian descent who migrated from Africa as well as from the Indian subcontinent, and South East Asia. In varying degrees one can find individuals from all of these backgrounds who identified and empathised for their own reasons with the anti-apartheid struggle. Although the psychological aspect of solidarity action is not the subject of this book, undoubtedly, like the anti-slavery campaigns of the late eighteenth century, there was among a cross-section of people a universal

sense of identification and support that the anti-apartheid solidarity movement was able to generate.

In referring to black communities throughout this narrative, it is necessary to keep in mind that the black population in Britain is complex and diverse, and belies simple generalisation. Factors to keep in mind are the regional differences, with their own local histories and influences that in themselves shaped the approach of these communities in their fight against racism. There are generational, class and educational factors, and differences in terms of where in the Caribbean particular individuals migrated from with their own distinct political cultures. These variables informed the experiences of individuals, influenced the wide range of cultural and political associations formed and fed into the ideological and strategic approach to anti-racist activity, and expressions of solidarity with the anti-apartheid struggle. Nevertheless, there was a consensus that motivated the activities of these groups: the need to fight the racism in British society and elsewhere. This determination transcended the sociological differences. In the following chapters the socio-economic and political context that influenced black activists in their approach to the South African liberation movement and the AAM will be taken into account. For the most part, the narrative focuses on London-based groups, although other cities, where relevant, will be included.

CHAPTER 1

THE WEST INDIAN AND AFRICAN ROOTS OF THE ANTI-APARTHEID MOVEMENT IN BRITAIN

Caribbean connections with South Africa

The death of a West Indian seaman in Cape Town provoked an international outcry in 1951. Milton King, a Barbadian, was assaulted by two white policemen and subsequently died in a police cell after a further savage beating. When the policemen escaped with little more than a fine, coordinated protests were held throughout the Caribbean with solidarity rallies organised in London by the League of Coloured Peoples.¹ Alan Cobley argued that these protests:

were of immense significance because they mark the beginning of the international anti-apartheid movement and presaged the first international trade sanctions imposed on South Africa, which were instituted by the Barbados and Jamaican governments in 1955.²

The Caribbean reaction to the King affair in South Africa is instructive in that it highlighted a tradition of race consciousness and political action against racism by West Indians who empathised and identified with the racial struggles of Africans. Besides Cobley, subsequent writers have provided insight into the cross-cultural flow of ideas, particularly Garveyism during the 1930s and 1940s. These ideas were carried by

West Indian seamen who serviced ships travelling between the Caribbean and Cape Town and by those who settled in South Africa during the 1930s.³ Garveyism had a significant impact on the development of African nationalism in South Africa, and seamen from the Caribbean were conveyors of a strong sense of race pride among the African and coloured communities where they settled. Moreover, due to the racism they faced at home and encountered within their trade, Copley tells us:

Black seamen were necessarily a closely knit fraternity, and often responded to racial and economic assaults on their position with a high degree of organization and a high level of political consciousness. During the 1920s it was Black seamen who carried the message of Garveyism throughout the Diaspora, and home to Africa.⁴

In South Africa, West Indians were prominent in the formation of the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union (ICU) in the 1920s, South Africa's first black trade union. It has been argued that this had its origins among Afro-Caribbean dock workers in Cape Town. Indeed, Clements Kadalie, ICU's founder and its general secretary, acknowledged the leading role played by West Indians, even though he held reservations about Garveyite ideas. Where did this radicalism come from? Undoubtedly, West Indians and South Americans of African descent, due to their turbulent history, were only too aware of the harsh nature of racism.

The manifestation of racism in the Caribbean fell within the parameters of what James has described as a 'pigmentocracy'.⁵ A legacy of the former plantation slave societies in the Caribbean were the racial hierarchies that continued to exist. Therefore, practice and convention meant that the darker-skinned islanders stayed at the bottom of the economic, political and social ladder while the lighter-skinned islanders formed the middle and upper strata of the society. Though not enshrined in law, the strict racial hierarchy determined the quality of an individual's education, employment, residence and even marriage prospects.⁶ Politically conscious West Indians travelling abroad and domiciled throughout the British Empire would therefore be sensitive to manifestations of racism and were determined to oppose it abroad as well

as at home.⁷ Therefore, the impact of the King affair reverberated throughout the Caribbean. The brutality of the white assault in South Africa against a fellow West Indian, which had been treated so lightly by the authorities, had to be challenged. The racist treatment of Milton King brought to Caribbean consciousness an ugly and naked form of racial aggression that could no longer be accepted – and made it personal. For all people of African descent in the Caribbean, the struggle against racism would never be ‘far from home’, to coin Copley’s phrase.⁸ The experience of racism for Africans in the diaspora meant that their own existence in the Americas and Europe was more often than not marred by racial discrimination. This in turn engendered empathy with Africans and instilled a determination to take steps that where possible would aim to go beyond mere critique and condemnation of the racist government of South Africa.

The pan-Africanist perspective on South Africa

From the beginning of the European–African encounter, there emerged a pattern of African chiefs and royal representatives sending their children to be educated in European educational institutions. However, some exchanges were less than equal, as the complex history of the transatlantic slave trade attests. After British colonialism became entrenched in Africa, there was no shortage in the number of deputations of African representatives to the centre of the Empire, in London. They came to make ultimately futile cases to British monarchs or their governments, regarding the land avarice and harsh treatment of Africans at the hands of European colonists in their subjugated lands.⁹ Similarly, throughout the latter part of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth, Africans and blacks of the diaspora visited Britain as part of various travelling entertainment ensembles; this spectacle of ‘the other’ often reinforced the racial stereotypes and prejudices of the day.¹⁰

Adi has shown that Africans in Britain during the early years of the twentieth century took an interest in South Africa. He highlights the Ethiopian Association of Edinburgh and the Ethiopian Progressive Association in Liverpool, formed in 1904. These groups concerned themselves with the plight of Africans during the 1906 Bambatha uprising in Natal, South Africa, as well as critiquing the racism in the civil service towards Africans in West Africa and fighting the colour bar

in Britain. In keeping with the deference of colonial subjects at the time, these student groups had faith in the British government to arbitrate on their behalf, even when anti-immigration laws aimed at non-whites signified the official intolerance of brown-skinned people. Confronting racism during their stay in Britain 'usually served to heighten the student's awareness of political issues [...] and familiarized them with a range of political opinions and organizations'.¹¹

Africans travelling within Britain were able to make connections with resident black Britons, no matter how tenuous or brief, and gained the support of various black-led organisations such as Harold Moody's League of Coloured Peoples (LCP).¹²

In 1910, after the Act of Union, which unified the self-governing territories of South Africa, the Cape Colony, Natal, Orange Free State and Transvaal, the three protectorates of Basutoland, Bechuanaland and Swaziland remained under British control. At the time, the British government was faced by the choice of either accepting the full implications of white self-government in the country, or of insisting on equal treatment for Africans and non-whites under the new constitution.¹³ They acquiesced to Afrikaner pressure, bitterly disappointing the Africans who had fought on the British side during the Anglo-Boer War of 1899–1902. Rather over-optimistically Winston Churchill, then a Liberal MP, hoped that after the reconciliation between Briton and Boer, 'a new charity which may come from the feeling of unity may lead them [whites] to unite, not for the purposes of crushing the native by force, but in the nobler and wiser policy of raising the native to his proper position'.¹⁴ This hoped-for 'charity' of white treatment towards the African never materialised. Reconciliation between the white races was pursued at the expense of African equality. The British government – in the face of African opposition to the transfer of the three protectorates of Basutoland, Bechuanaland and Swaziland into South African control, and given the British fears of the spread of the racial domination already entrenched in South Africa – took the decision to suspend the incorporation of the three protectorates into the Union until conditions were met that would satisfy the British government. Therefore, Britain would remain a trustee of the protectorates. Their eventual incorporation into South Africa was envisaged, however, and safeguards for African rights, though vague, were articulated in the preamble to the Act. The time of transfer

was to be set by agreement between the British and South African governments. It was not until early in the 1930s that reports emerged that South Africa would soon push for an immediate transfer of the protectorates into its control. This caused Harold Moody of the LCP to address a letter to the British Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, J.H. Thomas, in which he opposed the transfer because it would be an 'extension of the present South African method of dealing with native races'.¹⁵

In 1934, when General Jan Smuts visited London, in a speech to the South African Club he implied that if incorporation of the protectorates was delayed, the Union might desist from taking the territories, with possible damage to their economic interests.¹⁶ The Union was a major market for agricultural goods and livestock and, in turn, the protectorates supplied the Union with cheap labour for its mines and farms. Labour shortages for mining and agriculture had intensified because of the fall in labour from the Portuguese colonies in southern Africa. Acquiring the protectorates therefore became a necessity for the government in South Africa. There was sympathy for South Africa's demands among some British politicians, who argued that the protectorates should be given to the South Africans because of their loyalty during World War I, and the contribution of individuals such as Smuts.¹⁷

In fact, the enactment of the Statute of Westminster in 1931, and the Status of South Africa Act, three years later, meant that the safeguards regarding the protectorates included in the South Africa Act of 1909 could, after incorporation, be amended by the Union government without having to refer to the British government. Influential imperial figures such as Lord Lugard felt it was not the right time for the transfer of the protectorates to South Africa; he proposed that when this did happen, a treaty should give assurance to Africans that unilateral change would not occur without their consultation.¹⁸ Furthermore, the signatories should not just be hereditary and conservative chiefs, but representatives of the people, not necessarily from the elite. How this would be ensured was not made clear. The job of the British government until that day would be to improve the situation of Africans in these territories by introducing educational, economic and administrative reforms.¹⁹

Black groups such as the International African Service Bureau (IASB) and LCP rejected this proposal for a number of reasons. In a petition to J.H. Thomas, the colonial secretary, the IASB objected that Africans and Africa were not property to be handed around between the imperial powers. Moreover, the policy of South Africa towards its indigenous population was repugnant to these groups and there was no reason to believe this would not be extended to the three territories. The views of the Africans had not been elicited, because they did not have representatives in Westminster.²⁰ In 1938, the Trinidadian Marxist, George Padmore, produced a pamphlet under the name of IASB concerning this issue, entitled, 'Hands off the Protectorates'. This opposed the transfer on the grounds that the Africans themselves did not want it.²¹ The LCP's objection lay in the fact that in South Africa the Africans felt that 'their brothers of the High Commission Territories [the protectorates] should not share the unhappiness and misfortune of their situation in the Union'.²² The transfer of the High Commission Territories was to remain unresolved until each attained full independence from Britain in the 1960s.²³

Throughout the first 50 years of the twentieth century, black South Africans continued to travel to Britain to appeal to Parliament to intercede with the South African government as the steady erosion of African rights continued unabated. This systematic dispossession was enshrined in the notorious 1913 Natives Land Act, and gathered pace after the loss of voting rights in 1936 for the small minority of 'civilized' Cape Africans who had up till then retained the privilege of voting.²⁴ The African belief, represented by deputations of the ANC, that the British political establishment could help, continued even after further economic, social and political restrictions led to the introduction of apartheid in 1948.²⁵ Periodic deputations arrived in Britain from the early years of the 1900s. Even though little evidence survives of contact between Africans and black Britons, it is unlikely that individuals would not have come into contact through church circles and social or civic organisations, whether black-led or organised by white philanthropists.²⁶ Certainly, the Universal Races Congress held in London in 1911, attended by Alfred Mangena and John Tengu Jabavu, who met W.E.B. Du Bois, would have attracted black Britons. Blacks in Britain would have been a supportive and captive audience for Jabavu's paper on 'Native races of South Africa',

which outlined the deprivations under which they suffered in their own lands.²⁷

Considering this, it is hardly surprising that from the beginning of the twentieth century, colonial subjects from the British West Indies and British Africa expressed concern about the future of Africans in South Africa and other African colonies. Among black intellectuals, there were debates and deliberations regarding African peoples under colonial government as well as those who lived in purportedly 'free' societies such as the United States. In its southern states particularly, there continued (with little censure) the practice of arbitrary murders of mainly black males by lynching.²⁸

In the early twentieth century, it was a West Indian who formulated a movement with international scope that would act as a galvanising tool for all African peoples. In 1900 Henry Sylvester Williams, a lawyer from Trinidad, organised the first Pan-African Conference in London.²⁹ His experiences of racism in the West Indies, South Africa and Britain confirmed his belief that African people would have to be organised and united if they wanted to challenge the inequities of their environment. Around this period, black communities in Britain were numerically small but distinct. From the late eighteenth century there were about 10,000 black people in Britain; of these, 5,000 were based in London and others were spread around the country with the larger clusters in the major trading ports of Liverpool, Bristol or Cardiff. By 1900, black citizens numbered around 10–12,000.³⁰ These communities were comprised mainly of sailors and dockworkers and travellers passing through. However, there were stable communities created through marriage with the local white population, and these tended to be tradesmen and various types of skilled and unskilled workers. But there was also a small professional class of clergymen, doctors, dentists, lawyers, small-scale businessmen and journalists, as well as students and those in the entertainment business as musicians, actors or singers.³¹ Networks undoubtedly existed, especially in the insular world of the black educated elite who encountered each other through membership of professional and social bodies.³²

The call for pan-African unity to fight for political, economic, racial and social justice for all African peoples was not new. The spread of pan-Africanism from the early twentieth century was the latest manifestation of earlier efforts by African and black diaspora intellectuals who

theorised the negative impact of racism and determined to redress the wrongs perpetrated against people of African descent. Advocates of the upliftment of black peoples such as David Walker, Martin Delaney, James Horton, Edward Blyden, Booker T. Washington and the scientist Carter Woodson were forerunners in espousing the ideas of black empowerment, nationally and internationally, which later activists would champion throughout the twentieth century.³³ After the first meeting in 1900, further conferences followed in Paris in 1919, London and Brussels in 1921, London, Lisbon and New York in 1927, Manchester in 1945, Dar-es-Salaam in 1974 and Kampala in 1994. These meetings did not have a significant immediate impact on the policies of the British or Western governments. In black intellectual circles, however, the series of conferences had an affirming effect upon thinkers seeking to account for the persistence of white racism and attempting to find solutions to the lowly positions into which Africans were consigned.

Ideologies of black unity and empowerment were propounded, and these undoubtedly had an effect on black elites studying abroad in European cities who were able to attend these meetings. They would later return to their colonial territories ready to challenge their European colonial masters in the era of decolonisation. One can but speculate on the effect that these meetings had on the participants. A significant number of African resistance leaders who went on to rule their countries after independence had either attended such meetings or had come into contact with individuals who were pan-Africanists. These included Kwame Nkrumah and George Padmore (who would gain a high position in Nkrumah's government), Hastings Banda of Malawi and Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya. The coming together of diverse black men and women exchanging ideas, discussing their experiences and comparing skills, inculcated a growing confidence that African peoples had a future beyond European colonial domination. They explored the possibilities of pan-African and black diaspora unity and redoubled their determination to support each other and fight against racism. Throughout the twentieth century, various individuals pursuing the pan-African dream continued to meet in the belief that they shared commonalities and could work together to realise common aspirations as 'children of Africa'.³⁴

It was at the fifth Pan-African conference in Manchester in 1945 that the South African issue emerged as a high-profile topic among discussants. In attendance was Obafemi Awolowo, Hastings Banda, Jomo Kenyatta, W.E.B. Du Bois, Ras T. Makonnen, Kwame Nkrumah and George Padmore, and others who went on to play prominent roles in the black intellectual world and the arena of African and Caribbean political and international affairs.³⁵ During the conference, there was a strongly expressed determination and unity of opinion on the need to support fellow Africans struggling against European colonialism and racism. When it came to the subject of South Africa the conference participants saw themselves as:

Representing millions of Africans and peoples of African descent throughout the world [who] condemn with all its power the policy towards Africans and other non-Europeans carried out by the Union of South Africa which, although representing itself abroad as a democracy with a system of parliamentary government, manifests essentially the same characteristics as Fascism [...] this congress pledges itself to work unceasingly with and on behalf of its non-European brothers in South Africa until they achieve the status of freedom and human dignity.³⁶

This was in the immediate aftermath of the end of the war in Europe, where fascism with its racist undertones had been uncovered for all to see. Moreover, in South Africa during the war years, there were indicators of domestic right-wing extremism. The Smuts government in South Africa had interned individuals such as B.J. Vorster, who later went on to become prime minister, and other members of the extra-parliamentary right-wing group Ossewa Brandwag, which opposed South Africa's entry into the war on the British side. Sharing sympathies with Nazi Germany, a number of Afrikaners who took up positions in the apartheid government had received university education in Nazi Germany during the 1930s.³⁷ The implication that South Africa was moving towards its own version of fascism with strong racist undertones struck a chord with black and white progressives around the world. The Pan-African conference delegates agreed on ten resolutions regarding South Africa. Although these ultimately fell on deaf ears, the demands

had highlighted the delegates' understanding of, and sympathy for, the situation in which Africans found themselves trapped.³⁸

Two representatives of the ANC testified at the Manchester conference, Peter Abrahams and Mark Hlubi, who both addressed a session chaired by W.E.B. Du Bois. They described in detail the situation of Africans, Asians and coloureds in South Africa as they talked of the forced separation from the land, the suppression of mine wages, the impact of urbanisation on the African family, the pass laws, the denial of voting rights to blacks, the use of the colour bar and the effects of imposing taxes on Africans. Also detailed were the shocking living conditions of both rural and urbanised Africans, the lack of social and welfare benefits, and the poor education of black children that would entrench African subservience and underachievement for generations to come. Mark Hlubi opened the debate by outlining the social, economic and political disadvantages suffered by non-whites in the Union of South Africa.

The 'native policy' of South Africa was based on the segregation of Africans; racial discrimination was the basis of all legislation. Moreover, the Africans were denied the vote, but yet were compelled to pay poll and hut taxes irrespective of whether they were in employment or not. Those working in the towns and cities were concentrated into 'locations', which were basically impoverished ghettos.³⁹ This situation could not be changed by the workers as Africans were denied union membership and recognition. Later the Riotous Assembly Act (1956) would make protest meetings illegal. Considering this shocking state of affairs, Hlubi appealed to all African descendants to help their 'brothers' in South Africa to break away from the oppression of the white *herrenvolk*.⁴⁰ The South African writer and journalist Peter Abrahams expanded upon the grievances of the Africans and non-white groups in South Africa; he detailed the pass laws that restricted African movement: besides the receipts of the poll and hut taxes that served as passes, ten other documents had to be carried by Africans as they moved around.⁴¹ The pass regulated every aspect of the life of Africans, such as their movement around the cities, travel on the railways as they sought employment or visited allocated locations, or if they chose to remain outdoors after the 9pm curfew. Africans were obliged to acquire passes to live in the municipal locations. Only teachers and preachers could apply for a special pass to show they were exempted from carrying the other ten documents. After Abraham's depressing account, the report on the session concluded thus:

These were some of the hard facts, which we must fiercely condemn. We must indict an imperial Government which, after 40 years of trusteeship, left the native people with but 5% of its numbers literate and in grinding poverty, and slave conditions as the common lot [...] 100% sympathy and support was expressed to the South African people by representatives from the West Indies and other Colonies.⁴²

A resolution was sent to the Trusteeship Committee of the newly formed United Nations. It protested against South Africa's demand to abolish the mandate over South West Africa and incorporate the territory into its own boundaries. Black organisations represented at the congress reminded the organisation that:

The racial policy of [South Africa] is a direct affront to the express determination of the United Nations to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women of nations large and small.⁴³

There were many invitees to the congress who were unable to attend. Significantly from South Africa, a message was received from Professor D.D.T Jabavu from South Africa Native College, later renamed Fort Hare University. Jabavu was also president of the Non-European Convention.⁴⁴ In his messages he lamented his inability to be there in person. He explained that for Africans it was almost impossible to get approval to travel to England; he and his wife had been unable to do so. Nevertheless, they wished the congress and its resolutions every success.⁴⁵ Similarly, the secretary of the ANC sent a telegram, acknowledging the invitation to attend, and informed congress organisers of their preparation and arrangements to attend once passports were obtained. Plans were being drawn up for the ANC's president-general, Dr A.B. Xuma, to attend.⁴⁶

Unfortunately, these arrangements did not come to fruition as the South African delegates were unable to obtain passports and therefore could not attend. The significance of their exchanges and pan-African themed encounters demonstrate that the African leaders in South Africa valued the connection and association with blacks in the diaspora.

Moreover, the treatment of Africans in South Africa and the rest of the continent was a focal point for pan-Africanists even before apartheid became fully established. The small community of black British citizens did not lose interest in the colonial battles in Africa or the civil unrest in the Caribbean that resulted in political independence for the British Caribbean territories. During the mid 1950s, Sir Learie Constantine, popularly known as one of the greatest West Indian test cricketers, and who was also a trained barrister practising at the bar, wrote in detail about the racial politics of the day in Britain, America, the West Indies and Africa. Purporting to speak for non-whites he declared:

I am afraid it is hard for anyone of my colour to write dispassionately about what is happening in South Africa today [...] coloured nations gaining power and knowledge elsewhere will not forever sit idly by watching the progressive degradation without end that coloured people in Africa now suffer [...] if white people really believed themselves superior to Black ones, they would not fear [...] since then their own vaunted mental superiority to Blacks would keep them socially and economically at the top. The fact is that they know that their claimed superiority will not stand the test of equal opportunity and cannot be sustained save by bayonets [...] if democracy *means* the rule of the people by the people, then South Africa has no other future – but the result can either be achieved by tragedy and violence or by wisdom and law.⁴⁷

Undoubtedly Constantine was also speaking from his personal experience of racial prejudice when he was notoriously refused a room in the Imperial Hotel, Russell Square, London, because of his skin colour. Although he brought a lawsuit against the hotel, it was clear that the colour bar was alive and well in the establishments of British polite society.⁴⁸ In spite of Constantine's privileged position due to his sporting prowess, he was well aware of the racial discrimination that blighted the lives of people and the fight to overcome it by members of the black community. After the death of Harold Moody in 1947, Constantine took up the presidency of the LCP, with Dr Malcolm Joseph-Mitchell from Trinidad assuming the role of general secretary. The LCP was, however, already in decline and four years later came to an

end.⁴⁹ At this time, in the immediate postwar years, although the number of Africans in Britain remained relatively small, the political activity of particular groups ensured that the genesis of the AAM had a strong African base.⁵⁰ This has been often overlooked or referred to only fleetingly. The African roots of the AAM will now be examined.

African influences and the genesis of the Anti-Apartheid Movement

In 1986, nearly 30 years after the formation of the AAM, Lord Pitt of Hampstead made a statement to his fellow peers during a House of Lords debate on South Africa:

My Lords, I must begin by pointing out that the Anti-Apartheid Movement started in the basement beneath my surgery. In my student days South Africa and the southern states of America were the two areas which occasioned the greatest concern as they were regarded as the areas which showed the evil of racial segregation and racial oppression at its worst.⁵¹

Not only was David Pitt accurate in his recall of the origins of the AAM, but he was also not the only black citizen in his years of public service from the 1940s to care passionately about the events unfolding in South Africa. Pitt had arrived in Britain in 1933 from the British West Indian island of Grenada to study medicine at Edinburgh. Like many distinguished African and West Indian students in the twentieth century, he went on to combine a medical career with political activity throughout his life. After returning to London in 1947 to practise from his surgery at 200 Gower Street, he found himself at the heart of anti-colonial activity as it challenged the British government to grant independence.

From the 1960s, Pitt spearheaded campaigns for racial equality in Britain, and later anti-racist politics. His memoirs reveal a sense of the mood of optimism at that time; his premises functioned as the nerve centre of anti-colonial politics in Britain during the 1950s and early 1960s, and emerged as the cradle of the AAM.⁵² To demonstrate the formidable range of his networks, and the challenges he faced, a passage from his unpublished memoir describes his anti-colonial activity and the early beginnings of the AAM:

I was now committed to supporting the movement for African Independence and my surgery at 200 Gower Street had become one of the focal points in London. The Anti-Apartheid Movement had an office in the basement and so did the Committee of African Organisations. African activists seeking a place of shelter frequently arrived at 200 Gower Street.⁵³

Capturing the hostility of the press towards the activities of Gower Street, Pitt reminisces on the characterisation by one national newspaper, the *Sunday Express*, of his premises as being 'the house of the sick and angry' while discrediting the Committee of African Organisations as 'violently anti-British'. Furthermore, it warned of the committee's plan to demonstrate and protest against the imminent visit of the South African premier, Dr Verwoerd, to the Commonwealth Prime Minister's conference, and the planned vigil against the Sharpeville massacres.⁵⁴ Pitt comments, 'on the day that Verwoerd arrived both offices at Gower Street were empty. The staff was taking part in the demonstration [and] that day, arsonists set fire to the basement.'⁵⁵ David Pitt's memoirs provide an insight into a lost world of the activism of an elite and select group of Africans whose political consciousness had become sharpened by their residence at the very core of the British Empire. The organisation that would eventually become known as the AAM was an outgrowth of the Boycott Movement. This was formed in 1959 in response to the call of Chief Albert Luthuli, president of the ANC, to the international community to boycott South African goods.⁵⁶ Significantly, those heavily involved in guiding the activities of the Boycott Movement were members of the Committee of African Organisations (CAO) set up by African students living in the United Kingdom. The CAO was formed in March 1958 and was an amalgam of more than ten constituent bodies. Members of the CAO network were drawn from the following groups: the West African Students' Union (WASU), the Uganda National Congress and the Nigerian Union of GB & Ireland, African League, Ghana Students' Union, Sierra Leone Students' Union, the Kenya Students' Association, Tanganyika Students' Association, the South African Freedom Association, the African Forum and the Sierra Leone Students' Union.⁵⁷ The CAO focused primarily on the internal and international affairs of Africa and championed its political, economic and racial

liberation from European imperialism and colonialism. Furthermore, it aimed to fight for the civil rights of and against the discrimination towards Africans and people of African descent living in Britain. To this end its stated objectives were to:

Cooperate with any organisation on issues affecting continental Africa [...] to keep the conscience of the world alive to the problems affecting Africa [...] to provide facilities and a network of support for African leaders who visited the UK to press the British Government for Independence.⁵⁸

The COA office, located in Pitt's premises in Gower Street, became a focal venue where intense discussion and debates were conducted. Young African and West Indian intellectuals pondered how to bring about the liberation of their territories from European colonisers. From there, the COA attempted to meet its objective to provide an:

All-African forum for the discussion of matters affecting Africa [...] to work with, and promote the aims of the All-African Peoples Conference, as well as to fight for independent African states [...] to spread among Africans the spirit of Pan-Africanism [...] and to assist the struggle of our people for freedom, liberty, equality and national independence.⁵⁹

Little detail exists regarding the circumstances that led to the genesis or the background of its principal members. Adi has noted that the only published account of the formation of the COA that exists is the version provided by one of its early leaders, the Ghanaian Kwesi Armah. Armah alludes to the key role played by the struggle against the proposed new restrictive Franchise Bill in the Central African Federation in the founding of CAO. Evidence suggests that Alao Aka-Bashorun, a Nigerian student who was the president of WASU and the Nigerian Union and the first chairman of the CAO, also played a leading role in its formation. Shola Adenle, another Nigerian, and Denis Phombeah, a Tanzanian, were joint secretaries. Phombeah later became the CAO's general secretary.⁶⁰ The CAO's own publication, dated around the time of its first congress in 1965, states that the organisation was formed 'as a result of the deep desire among Africans in Britain to have a uniting

body, which would voice their opinion on African and world events.⁶¹ At the same time, South African émigrés had formed the South Africa Freedom Association, which became part of the Boycott Committee alongside the CAO.⁶²

The CAO was an anti-imperialist and anti-colonialist student and worker movement focused on contributing to struggles for national independence and unity of African peoples. Although their opinion may have been largely ignored among colonial and foreign office circles in London, Africans were determined not only to discuss and debate among themselves but to get their voices heard publicly. This was achieved through the setting up of an organisation with focused aims, and a willingness to collaborate with sympathetic allies. Africans who came to study in London did not lose sight of their overall determination to see the end of European control in their home territories. As they saw it, this refusal to remain silent on injustices prepared the ground for the quick response to the ANC leadership's call to boycott South African goods.

In drawing attention to the AAM's beginnings, therefore, one must recognise that its genesis grew out of African political activity in Britain at that time. There was a group of African organisations that mobilised around the various political, social and economic concerns of its members. The West African Students' Union, in existence since the 1920s, was well known by the 1950s as a representative of African interests in Britain.⁶³ Others worked alongside and allied themselves with anti-colonial organisations such as the Africa Bureau formed by Michael Scott in 1952, and the Movement for Colonial Freedom (MCF) formed by Fenner Brockway and others in 1954.⁶⁴ African activists involved themselves in these organisations and were key participants in high-profile anti-colonial campaigns and controversies that captured the minds of the public during the 1950s and 1960s. These included the Seretse Khama case, the predicament of the King of Buganda, protests against the imposition of the Central African Federation on the peoples of Nyasaland and the Southern and Northern Rhodesia, and the 'Release Jomo Kenyatta' campaign.⁶⁵

The CAO also regularly wrote letters to the British press and to government ministers protesting injustices against Africans in the Empire and racist attacks against blacks in Britain. One letter to the Prime Minister stated: 'Coloured citizens in the United Kingdom have lost confidence in the ability of the law-enforcing agencies to protect them

[we demand] police protection for all citizens and the introduction of laws against racism.⁶⁶ Its representatives formed part of a delegation that met with the Home Secretary in May 1959, calling for more government action and an enquiry into racism. They recommended the appointment of a Select Committee and suggested more active recruitment of black constables into the police force. It supported the peoples of Nyasaland and Southern Rhodesia seeking independence and protested against the arrest of African political leaders such as Hastings Banda of Nyasaland. The CAO organised over 300 meetings with the MCF and supported visiting African leaders such as Julius Nyerere of Tanganyika and Joshua Nkomo of Southern Rhodesia. It supported domestic British campaigns such as the campaign against nuclear weapons. Undoubtedly this created a fertile ground for boycott activities to emerge.⁶⁷

The CAO and the boycott campaign

The ANC's spring conference in South Africa during 1959 called for an international economic boycott of South African-produced goods. The declaration of this conference influenced the CAO's decision to launch a boycott campaign as a protest against the discriminatory acts against Africans in South Africa.⁶⁸ The All-African People's Conference held in Accra in December 1958 had also called on independent African countries to impose economic sanctions against South Africa. This decision may have played a part in influencing the CAO to launch its boycott.⁶⁹ The CAO's boycott subcommittee was launched in May 1959, chaired by Femi Okunnu, president of the Nigeria Union. Other members included representatives from African student unions based in Britain, and Claudia Jones of the *West Indian Gazette*.⁷⁰ Also, there was Rosalyn Ainslie and Steve Naidoo from the South African Freedom Association (SAFA). With the exception of Claudia Jones, all the members of the subcommittee were delegates of CAO's constituent organisations, which held their meetings at the CAO headquarters at 200 Gower Street. The subcommittee worked closely with Tennyson Makiwane, formerly one of the accused in the 1956 treason trial, and later, in exile, a representative of the ANC in London, and with leading members of the CAO such as Alao Bashorun, the chair, and Denis Phombeah, an activist from Tanganyika. In letters to potential supporters, Bashorun explained that the CAO had been asked by the

South African National Congress, the Coloured People's Association and the South African Congress of Trade Unions to boycott South African goods. It was hoped that this would force the Nationalist government to desist from its policy of racial discrimination and segregation.⁷¹

The CAO called a press conference on 24 June 1959 to maximise publicity for the boycott campaign. The speakers were Kenyama Chiume of the banned Nyasaland ANC and Tennyson Makiwane of the ANC. The press conference was followed by a 24-hour vigil outside South Africa House in London. On 26 June the CAO held a public meeting in Holborn Hall, London, calling for the boycott of fruit, cigarettes and imported goods from South Africa. The speakers were Julius Nyerere, president of Tanganyika African National Union (TANU); once again Kenyama Chiume, Tennyson Makiwane and Vella Pillay of the South African Indian Congress; Michael Scott of the Africa Bureau; and Trevor Huddleston. The meeting agreed to boycott all South African goods sold in the United Kingdom as well as hold protests in the shops that sold these goods.

In the days that followed, shopping areas were picketed. Leaflets issued by CAO members encouraged shoppers to purchase Caribbean, European and Australian goods rather than South African produce. They carried placards that read, 'Don't Buy Slavery, Don't Buy South African'. Leaflets handed out carried the slogan 'Boycott Slave Driver's Goods'. The idea of boycotting goods had South African antecedents and was a tactic used by the ANC and the Congress movement in South Africa throughout the 1950s. Taking inspiration from these, there had been attempts at boycotts of South African goods in Britain during the same period. However, the Labour Party's National Executive Committee rejected a resolution sent to the Labour Party conference in 1957, urging members not to buy South African goods.⁷² Then in July 1959, the CAO, in conjunction with Finchley Labour Party, held pickets in north London as well as at St Pancras, Hampstead and Brixton. It encouraged other organisations to set up their own protests and courted the support of trade councils and local Labour Party branches. Support was widespread and demands for the 'Boycott Slave Driver's Goods' leaflet were so high that the CAO began asking supporters for donations to finance the cost of printing larger numbers. A branch of the Association of Engineering and Shipbuilding Draftsmen had requested 5,000 copies of the leaflet. An important supporter was the Movement for Colonial

Freedom, which had contacts and branches throughout the country; another was the Liberal Party. The campaign brought unforeseen challenges, such as the constant demand for speakers and the increasing demand for more leaflets. A plan to give prominence to South African brand names in 1959 produced the problem of possible litigation, and printers refused to print. Also, criticism had to be fended off from the national press and various trade organisations.

By the scheduled subcommittee meeting at the end of July 1959, it was noted that after the initial impact of the campaign, the CAO had not been able to mobilise enough forces to sufficiently broaden and intensify the campaign. The CAO decided to work harder and broaden the movement nationally and internationally. It proposed strategies to gain the support of more sympathetic 'eminent sponsors' such as Bertrand Russell and the Conservative peer Lord Altrincham, who were contacted by Denis Phombeah. The boycott campaign attracted the support of the National Union of Students at Oxford, Cambridge and the London School of Economics, among other universities. The Labour opposition and TUC also supported and urged a one-month boycott from February to March 1960.⁷³

Restructuring of the Boycott subcommittee in September 1959 also brought a new name, the South Africa Boycott Committee. New officers emerged from a variety of groups such as Socialist Left Youth, Robin Field from the Congress of Democrats (COD), Robin Ballin, M. Chetty, Abdul Minty, Kader Asmal, Raymond Kunene of the South African Freedom Association, Johnny James of the British Guiana Freedom Association and Derrick Sylvester from Movement for Colonial Freedom. Denis Phombeah chaired the meetings; Rosalyn Ainslie of the South African Freedom Association was now secretary, Vella Pillay of the South Africa Indian Congress acted as treasurer. By the end of November 1959, Tennyson Makiwane recruited Patrick van Rensburg of the South African Liberal Party to become director of what was now called the Boycott Movement Campaign. It became apparent that most of the participants increasingly involved were South Africans who had fled to Britain due to South African government pressure or were in self-imposed exile.⁷⁴ Although the CAO chaired the Boycott Committee, it began to play a less prominent role. Though the committee still functioned in CAO's Gower Street office and benefitted from the use of their facilities, namely phone and general administrative help, a subtle

shift of its organisation and perspective began to develop. Christabel Gurney writes:

It was becoming clear that if the campaign was to fulfil its potential, the Committee needed a broader base with more formal representation from a wider range of British-based organisations [...] the Committee was very concerned to achieve the correct balance between South African and British involvement [...] this arrangement of personnel linked satisfactorily South African and English participation.⁷⁵

Furthermore, it was decided to contact foreign embassies in London and abroad through connections in Britain as well as domestic political organisations, the media and trade unions.

In fact, just as the Boycott Movement Campaign was about to adopt a final name change and reconstitute itself as the Anti-Apartheid Movement, the front page of one of its publications acknowledged obliquely its African origins, 'the [Boycott] Movement was first launched by the CAO, who transmitted the appeal from South Africa in June 1959'.⁷⁶ From this point, the CAO started to loosen its grip on the Boycott Movement, mainly as exiled South Africans started to inhabit its internal structures.

The Boycott Movement Campaign then renamed itself the Anti-Apartheid Coordinating Committee, then the Anti-Apartheid Committee and finally the Anti-Apartheid Movement in March 1960, just before the Sharpeville massacre. The Sharpeville tragedy would transform the nature and direction of future anti-apartheid activism in Britain.⁷⁷ The movement itself would begin to develop a coherent focus on southern Africa and apartheid in particular, through its campaigns bringing to the British public's attention the injustices of apartheid and its impact on its victims' lives. The movement's genius would be in its strategy of cultivating broad-based public support for its campaigns, often embarrassing the British government into at least publicly criticising Pretoria's excesses and urging the dismantling of apartheid.

Responding to the tragedy of Sharpeville in 1960, it was the CAO, together with the Movement for Colonial Freedom and the London Boycott Committee, which called a protest demonstration in London. Thousands marched from Hyde Park to South Africa House. The CAO

sent out its own press releases condemning the massacre and the banning of the ANC. These were sent to press agencies worldwide as well as to international leaders. In the aftermath of Sharpeville, the CAO continued to engage in activities to support the struggle in South Africa. In June 1960, it organised a packed meeting to mark South Africa Freedom Day.⁷⁸ In September, side by side with the AAM, the Movement for Colonial Freedom, the African Bureau and Christian Action, the CAO organised and participated in a meeting of 700 in Caxton Hall to present the newly created 'South Africa United Front', which included the ANC, PAC, South African Indian Congress (SAIC) and South West African National Congress (SWANC), with speakers including Oliver Tambo, a prominent ANC member, and Yusuf Dadoo, president of the South African Indian Congress and a leading member of the South African Communist Party. Further calls were made to boycott South African produce.⁷⁹

In 1964, the CAO now renamed the Council of African Organisations, participated with the AAM, ANC and the Committee of Afro-Asian and Caribbean organisations to coordinate a hunger strike against apartheid. This was part of a worldwide campaign for the release of political prisoners in South Africa. However, from this point onwards it was the AAM that became the spearhead of anti-apartheid activity in Britain. The CAO continued to support calls for the wider independence struggles of various African territories in line with its objective of 'unity for Africa and freedom for all African countries'.⁸⁰ Although the organisation's objectives remained the same, as yet no evidence has been uncovered to show when the organisation ceased to exist; so far no documents have come to light of its activities after 1966.

The Committee of African Organisations with its African and African-Caribbean members was present at the very inception of the AAM as it began its development into one of the most formidable protest organisations of the last half of the twentieth century. It was soon realised, however, that in order to have an impact on the public consciousness, attract support, and have access to the corridors of political power in Britain, the movement would have to widen its support base. Attracting eminent persons to support the organisation raised its profile and enabled access to those in positions of power.⁸¹ The influx of South African exiles with considerable networking skills also

changed the nature of the organisation. These changes helped the AAM to survive and become the established national and international organisation that it did, while the CAO's direct control began to wane, particularly as it began to concentrate on bringing to fruition the anti-colonial struggles of African territories seeking independence from their colonial masters. The AAM, however, chose to focus exclusively on southern Africa. The CAO's decreased contribution to anti-apartheid activity from the late 1960s was also due to the changing nature of its membership and its shifting priorities. The activists who made up the CAO and similar organisations were mostly leaders-in-waiting. Once political independence became a reality they returned to their countries, where their skills and knowledge were needed to contribute to their own national struggles in the lands of their birth.

In Britain there was a small elite group of domiciled black community leaders who had distinguished themselves as spokespersons for anti-colonial causes. Now that political independence was spreading through the continent of Africa, these leaders turned their attention to the British citizens who entered Britain from the Caribbean, Africa and Asia from the late 1950s. West Indian migration was largely fuelled by the vigorous recruitment drive to provide workers primarily for sections of the public sector and manufacturing and industrial jobs of postwar Britain. Gaps in the job market were largely due to migrating white Britons leaving a dismal postwar Britain, with unappealing jobs, for the promise of a fresh new start with prospects and a lifestyle many could only dream of in Britain. The dominion countries to which they migrated had not suffered the bomb damage that Britain had experienced, and the close cultural ties with Britain meant that British migrants were helped to quickly adjust to a lifestyle that was culturally not dissimilar from Britain. The sunnier climes of Australia, New Zealand, Canada and, ironically, South Africa and Rhodesia, were popular destinations for aspirant and adventurous white Britons seeking a better life after the hardship of war.⁸² Ironically, their counterparts, the so-called 'coloured migrants', entering from former British colonies and seeking improved lifestyles in the United Kingdom, were not accorded the same welcome once they arrived in their new home.

Although some West Indians came to Britain to study, the majority from the early 1960s came with the intention to work, earn cash and

then return home. However, after the settlement of wives and children, it soon became apparent that priorities had to concentrate on the welfare of the settled family. Many did not have the free time to actively engage in anti-apartheid solidarity action. They may have empathised with Africans and their fight against racism, but the anti-apartheid campaigns of the 1960s and 1970s did not attract high levels of black participation. Periodic popular black support of the various sports boycotts and protests were noteworthy, however, and will be discussed in following chapters. Black engagement with anti-apartheid politics from the late 1960s up to the mid-1980s was often the preserve of black intellectuals and political activists rather than the majority of 'ordinary' black householders negotiating the challenges of everyday life. This is not to say that individual acts of solidarity were not undertaken. Plenty of anecdotes abound, yet while for obvious reasons private actions are hard to measure and quantify, members of black communities did find creative ways to show their solidarity with the anti-apartheid struggle. From our current vantage point we tend to forget the nature of the often blatant racism of British society during the 1960s, 1970s and into the 1980s. It was all-consuming for many black families up and down the country, especially those in the major cities. As Hall explains:

What was happening on the ground was so overwhelming, happening at such a rapid pace, and intensified so much. [Domestic racism] absolutely preoccupied people in their lived situations [...] affected jobs, it affected where they could walk down the streets, it affected whether their kids would be recognised in schools, it affected whether you could drive a car and not be stopped by the police. People were bedded down in those daily struggles; they could also see that it connected with what was happening in Africa and in the US. But what they could do something about was right there in front of them [...] it is not a surprise that the overwhelming political energy went into the building of resistance at a local level, rather than the building of anti-apartheid politics.⁸³

Nonetheless, black intellectuals and activists such as Stuart Hall, John La Rose, Chris Lemet, David Pitt, Eric and Jessica Huntley, Walter

Rodney (for the brief period he was in the United Kingdom) and others who were already highly politicised due to their experiences in the Caribbean, found time to devote energy to the persistent problems of race that infused parts of Africa with sizeable European populations. They also keenly followed developments in South Africa. These activists viewed racial matters in South Africa as part of a worldwide system of racism that disadvantaged the lives of Africans and people of African descent wherever they lived. Hall, as one of the founding members of the New Left in the 1950s, and later as the editor of *New Left Review*, not only addressed domestic issues of race, but turned to the wider international struggles against racial injustice. For him and his colleagues:

South Africa was central to our political concerns from the 1960s, and especially from Soweto onwards. There were people that made those connections, there were people who were alive to the Southern Africa situation and who were activists.⁸⁴

As the first generation of the children of Caribbean migrants began to progress through the education system and become politically informed regarding domestic and international affairs, they started to engage in anti-apartheid activities on their own terms. The community activist and author Trevor Carter recalled:

Black students were the main participants in anti-apartheid action as opposed to the general black population, ordinary blacks engaged with their own 'bread and butter' issues of education, employment, housing, police harassment.⁸⁵

Conclusion

The early beginnings of the AAM emerged out of the anti-colonial activities of the Committee of African Organisations. It was nurtured and operated from the premises of David Pitt and formed part of a longer history of African and African-Caribbean anti-colonial and anti-racist activity on British soil. Its origins and the significance of those involved in its early activities formed part of the twentieth-century pattern of debate and activism among Africans and people of African descent living in Britain, for whom racial inequality in South Africa and elsewhere was

a perennial concern and a matter to be challenged and resisted. Another feature of this activism is that initially it was mainly London-based, as so many black immigrants studied or had settled in the city. From the mid-1970s, however, anti-apartheid activity, though still very much London-based and where the headquarters of the AAM remained, nevertheless dispersed to the major cities of Birmingham, Nottingham, Manchester, Bristol and older areas of black settlement such as Liverpool. The next chapter turns to the domestic political context that formed the background against which the AAM had to organise its activities in support for the liberation movement.

CHAPTER 2

‘ENEMIES OF APARTHEID ... FRIENDS OF SOUTH AFRICA’: THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT AND THE ANTI-APARTHEID MOVEMENT, 1950s–80s

The preceding chapter showed the empathy and concern that politically active members of the black diaspora expressed regarding the treatment of Africans in South Africa during the first half of the twentieth century. Although the formation of the Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAM) was shown to be a response to boycott South African goods by of the African National Congress (ANC), it had emerged from African anti-colonial activity in 1950s London.¹ The influence of the Committee of African Organisations (CAO), which had been so prominent in the early phase of the Boycott Movement, receded as the involvement of South African exiles grew and as the movement transformed into the AAM.² From this point, the leadership of the AAM was determined to do everything in its power to educate and galvanise the public against the apartheid state and to increase pressure on the British government to influence Pretoria to end apartheid. However the AAM faced a formidable challenge, not least in the hostility it met from Mrs Thatcher and her government. What follows in this chapter is an assessment of the British government's approach to the apartheid state – the postwar continuity between the Labour and Conservative governments as they argued against isolating South

Africa – and its defence of its position in the face of criticism and activities by the AAM.

British government 'realpolitik' concerns with South Africa, 1948–79

During the 1980s the Thatcher government, because of its refusal to impose sanctions on South Africa, was accused by its critics of being the main apologist for the apartheid state. Archbishop Huddleston admonished the Prime Minister:

There can be no moral justification for continuing to collaborate with the apartheid system. Nor can anyone doubt the impact sanctions would have if applied collectively by the international community [...]. If you persist in blocking sanctions in the EEC, the Commonwealth, and the UN, Britain will assume the role of No.1 protector of apartheid in South Africa [...] Have the courage to abandon your opposition to sanctions and join the international community in imposing effective measures to isolate South Africa.³

In typically robust fashion and reflecting the adversarial 'ping-pong' that characterised Mrs Thatcher's correspondence with the AAM, she wrote years later in response to a similar charge:

The accusation that Britain supports apartheid is absurd [...] the South African government has to be convinced of the need for change, since it is they who must take the initiative to dismantle apartheid. This is why our policy of pressure and encouraging is directed at them.⁴

However Margaret Thatcher's government's sensitivity to Pretoria's position was not a departure from the stance held by previous British governments. In short, the foreign policy interest of the British government towards South Africa had changed little during the postwar period. Vested British interests overseas remained unchanged irrespective of which political party headed the government. There are shifts in tone and in emphasis but the objectives of the country as articulated by the political elite remained essentially the same.

From the introduction of apartheid by the Nationalist government in South Africa in 1948, successive British governments did little more than verbally condemn the excesses of the apartheid state. And even though the underlying structural inequalities presented British governments with an uncomfortable dilemma, they chose not to censure South Africa in any significant way. They preferred to use their UN veto to forestall the potential damage that economic sanctions would inflict on the country and its trading partners, including Britain. Furthermore, as the cold war between East and West gathered pace from the late 1940s, anxiety regarding the spread of communism throughout independent African states concerned Westminster as well as Washington.⁵ South Africa's avowedly anti-communist stance ensured that Western governments were reluctant to alienate this ally.

In 1948, while a Labour government was in power, Aneurin Bevan articulated concerns regarding the Soviets and their influence on the continent of Africa.⁶ Writing to Prime Minister Clement Attlee, he expressed his fears that the Russians might soon take steps to supplant the British position in Africa:

I have been discussing with the Colonial Secretary the question of communism in our overseas territories. I am rather worried about the situation, especially in Africa, where it seems to me that we must ensure that we are properly equipped to deal with a really serious Soviet inspired communist movement [...] we ought to take steps now to counter it.⁷

In light of this, one can see the importance that South Africa assumed for Britain and the anti-communist Western bloc. They were determined not to let the Soviets gain the upper hand in the brinkmanship strategies of the cold war. Strategic considerations, vital resources for the arms race and trade interests, made it essential to keep South Africa in the Western camp, the unpalatable apartheid policies notwithstanding. Similarly, during Conservative Party rule in the early 1950s, Lord Salisbury argued that:

We must do all we can to preserve and strengthen our relations with South Africa. This is important not only on the general ground of the desirability of maintaining our Commonwealth links, but also

for weighty strategic and economic reasons. The Nationalist government's willingness to co-operate both in Middle East defence in wartime and in anti-Communist measures represents a change in traditional policy which must be encouraged.⁸

In the immediate postwar period, the value of South Africa remained critical for Britain as it tried to recover its pre-war strength and influence. Ministers placed a high premium on retaining access to the Simonstown naval base through the presence of British military personnel during peace time and in the event of war. Militarily and strategically, a good relationship with South Africa was important. Commenting on British strategy during these years, Lissoni argues:

British policy accordingly had to balance Britain's short against her long-term interests. Britain's economic stake, strategic interests, and her position in the High Commission Territories meant that she could not afford to break off relations with South Africa [...] [however this could have] harmful consequences [...] on black African opinion and the possibility that, in a not too distant future, political power might pass to the African majority of the population.⁹

Reflecting these concerns, Hyam and Henshaw argue that the British government was left with little choice but to treat South Africa as 'half-ally and half-untouchable at the same time, equivocating on sanctions and continuing to try to preserve its essential interests'.¹⁰ According to these authors, British officials with an eye on geopolitics and long-term calculation sought to keep up a working relationship with the South African government despite tensions and misunderstandings. They chose to pursue this strategy due to their perceived moral and kinship obligation to South Africa. Maintaining strong bonds would stop international rivals taking Britain's place and leave the way open to build contacts with the African majority, which might one day organise a government. Fundamentally, however, the importance of South Africa as a source of supply for raw materials won the argument to maintain close links between South Africa and Britain. Significantly, the health of the sterling area of British currency was held to be dependent on Britain accessing 'a substantial part of South Africa's gold output' and 'an

important market for our exports'.¹¹ The importance of South Africa's usefulness to Britain and the West in the cold war struggle was further underlined by a confidential report sent by the British High Commissioner to London. According to his assessment, the South African Prime Minister, D.F. Malan, wanted to:

Help to stop the Russians from trying to carry their doctrines from Asia to Africa. His government have for the first time in South African history, entered into a commitment in peace-time to go to war, if it becomes necessary, in alliance inter alia with the United Kingdom.¹²

It is worth remembering that, at this time, the official attitude of white politicians in South Africa to any form of African political autonomy and parity with whites tended to be hostile. There was widespread apprehension of African moves towards independence and what was viewed as the promotion of black political interests at the expense of white settlers in east and central Africa. According to D.F. Malan, the Prime Minister of the Nationalist government that introduced apartheid, decolonisation was, 'a virus, at least as great a menace as communism'.¹³ Moreover, he saw Britain's acceptance of the Gold Coast (Ghana) into the Commonwealth as undermining its cultural and political unity and potentially adding to the organisation's decline. This perspective was predicated on the increasingly outmoded belief that the Commonwealth should remain as the exclusive preserve of white member states, which were overwhelmingly European in origin and cultural heritage.

The impact of South Africa's anti-communism on British foreign policy makers cannot be underestimated. Although there may have been unease over the nature of apartheid, there was agreement between both sides over the role that South Africa should play in any potential cold war conflict. British governments were not prepared to abandon South Africa and its contribution to Western defence, however objectionable its racial policies. Moreover, it was believed that communists had hijacked African aspirations for self-government. The presence of a Communist Party in South Africa caused enough alarm for a British official to write anxiously, 'there is a Communist party in the Union of South Africa and its influence is considerable among the native, Indian

and coloured labour elements'.¹⁴ Members of the ANC were suspected of being communist or harbouring communist sympathies. The ANC was viewed as being controlled by naive dupes or by potentially dangerous communist subversives eager to seize the reins of power. Underlying this was a latent racial condescension that refused to accept that Africans in South Africa could think for themselves and have an independent desire for national or political freedom without the interference and influence of Marxist or socialist ideology. Moreover, the Western-educated 'detribalised native', as they were described in government papers, was viewed as particularly threatening. Laden with a patronising tone, officials wrote:

Generally speaking it is the detribalised native who responds best to communism, as he misses the narrow confines of tribal life and a leader on whom to bestow his loyalty.¹⁵

Keeping this in mind, Lord Home¹⁶ wrote to the Prime Minister, Harold Macmillan,¹⁷ and outlined the precarious position in which the British government found itself in late 1959:

We have an important stake in maintaining good relations with South Africa, our economic and strategic interests and the fact that the Union can, if she wishes, make life very unpleasant for the High Commission Territories [...] against this our friendly association with South Africa, our support of her in international affairs which is all too readily construed as condoning apartheid are a very grave embarrassment in our other international relations.¹⁸

Elsewhere, Home argued that the goodwill and confidence of newly independent states of Africa and Asia were of 'vital and increasing importance' to Britain but that supporting South Africa damaged confidence in and raised doubts about Britain's approach to race relations. With hindsight, it can be argued that if indeed African and Asian countries held suspicions about British sympathy with white South Africa over issues of race, the covert government discussions on how to reduce black immigration into Britain would have heightened their concerns further.¹⁹

Britain was caught between maintaining its vested interests in South Africa and trying to respond to Commonwealth pressure to take a firmer

stand against it. Officials realised that South Africa's insistence on racial inequality through the system of apartheid made a mockery of the ideals of the Commonwealth, which stood for multiracial parity and cooperation among nations. Furthermore, in the wider battle of the West's struggle against communism, in trying to gain the support of those in the non-aligned countries, South Africa was proving to be a liability in that 'continual [British] support of South Africa is going to cost us more and more; the sincerity of our professions and purposes in all other directions is going to be suspect'.²⁰ British concern centred on the possibility of the newly independent African states being driven into the Soviet sphere of influence due to their perception of British relations with South Africa. Ministers were aware that the British government's voting pattern in the United Nations, with the use of abstentions and vetoes in response to calls for sanctions against South Africa, left British representatives exposed to criticism. However, fear of antagonising African and Asian Commonwealth members had to be weighed against sustaining British vested interests in South Africa and the rest of the region.²¹ There appeared to be a cross-party agreement when it came to deflecting UN pressure for sanctions against South Africa. In a communication between government ministers in 1964, it was stated:

In Britain both the government and the Opposition are opposed to economic sanctions. They would hurt the very people whom we all wish to help, that is, the non-white population in Southern Africa [...] we believe that sanctions, even if they could be successfully applied, could not be effective without a full naval blockade over a long period [...] sanctions would not produce peaceful and orderly progress towards a true non-racial society such as we and many other countries would wish to see.²²

The South African perspective – 1960s

During the 1960s Africa was becoming rapidly decolonised and the newly independent African leaders tended to declare non-alignment in the cold war stand-off between the Soviets and Western European states and America. Simultaneously they accepted Sino-Soviet aid and technical support whenever the West proved unforthcoming, and this caused concern in Washington, London and with their North Atlantic

Treaty Organisation (NATO) partners. To stop independent states becoming too dependent on the Soviets, South Africa's foreign minister, Eric Louw, argued for more aid to the newly independent African states. In his view, Russia and Egypt had ideological motives behind their help of these new states. Even the Americans had a commercial motive and could prove to be a competitive threat. In Louw's opinion South Africa could provide a solution to this:

If we wish the new African states to work with the West, we must provide them with a link. The Union, as a white government in Africa, could provide this link, if only the prejudice against the Union in the new African states could be overcome.²³

Therefore, white South Africans saw themselves as having an important role to play as the bridge between the West and the underdeveloped African states. However, policy makers seemed blind to the fact that the harsh nature of their apartheid laws alienated the rest of Africa and undermined their expressed desire 'to help the other African states and to bind them more closely to the Western cause'.²⁴ From the adoption of apartheid under D.F. Malan's government in 1948, successive South African governments were not only anti-communist but they consistently reminded Western allies that they were the last bastion of Western civilisation in Africa, with a role to play in the defence against Soviet encroachment and domination. Black opposition in South Africa, particularly the ANC, was characterised as communist-led and inspired. Collaboration between the South African Communist Party and the ANC, some of whose members held positions in both movements, reinforced the perception that communist ideology and African nationalism were synonymous. This allowed white politicians to dismiss legitimate African grievances over the racism and discrimination that characterised the apartheid state.²⁵

The British perspective

During the 1960s, belief in the Soviet threat to Africa was not the preserve of South Africa's white rulers. The Rhodesian politician Roy Welensky wrote to the British Prime Minister, Harold Macmillan, about the threat to Africa of Russian penetration. To counter the threat, as he

saw it, he suggested a defence pact with South Africa, but the British government decided not to go ahead.²⁶ However, in a secret report to Prime Minister Harold Macmillan in 1964, entitled 'Communist Subversion', it was stated that:

The Communist aim is to acquire influence so that, on final subversion of its independence, Africa, or at least parts of it, will be incorporated within the communist world and made subject to its leadership's planning either Russian or Chinese as the case may be.²⁷

It was believed, moreover, that the granting of economic and educational aid by the Soviets to African countries, described in the report as 'incessant propaganda, bribery and flattery', and the use of 'agents of influence', was calculated to draw the recipients under the Soviet Union's sphere of influence.²⁸ In the cold war context, African liberation movements were often perceived as particularly susceptible to communist infiltration in the Soviet quest to possess the strategic and mineral resources that abounded in the continent. Of course, this narrow view conveniently overlooked the fact that the West was no less determined to gain access to these resources. Considering the importance placed on the strategic and natural resources throughout southern Africa, it was not long before the national liberation struggles of the region became an extension of the cold war between the East and the West. In the 1960s, there were doubts surrounding the genuine nationalism of liberation struggles in Africa. Fears of Soviet appropriation of indigenous grievances for its own ends haunted Western capitals many years after Macmillan's debriefing by his ministers regarding communist subversion in Africa. Senior and junior British government ministers saw communism as the major threat to the white presence in Africa. Indigenous struggles became subsumed within perceived communist encroachment into strategic parts of Africa. In particular, there were suspicions of domestic communist groups.²⁹ Despite these fears, looking forward to a time of possible black majority rule, British officials privately advised that:

Our relationship with the present government must be conducted in a way which will not damage irreparably the prospects of future co-operation with an African government.³⁰

Prime Minister Harold Macmillan acknowledged that on the question of apartheid Britain and the Union 'took a quite different view',³¹ meaning that Britain did not condone apartheid. Nevertheless, this was tempered by his belief that South Africa should not be alienated from international alliances over the matter of apartheid because:

The countries of the West were, after all, in great danger [...] from the immediate threat from the Soviet Union, there looms behind a possibly greater danger from China, which would have a population of 800 million by 1970. The countries of the West, if they were to survive, would be well advised to try to understand one another's difficulties and hold together despite difference of opinion on particular issues.³²

From this we see that, as far as Macmillan and his government was concerned, despite differing views on race, Britain and South Africa were partners against the potential threat of Soviet and Chinese socialism. However, Macmillan was prepared to be realistic about African aspirations for independence and political power in countries where they were predominant. Therefore, his intent behind the 'Winds of Change' speech delivered to the South African parliament in 1960 was to warn South Africa's white rulers that they would have to accept the fact of African political autonomy in the rest of the continent, and possibly a form of African participation in the political process within their own national boundaries. This precipitated an irritated and defensive response that eventually left South Africa in a dangerously exposed and untenable position in the Commonwealth, where criticism of their apartheid policy reached the point of potentially breaking up the organisation.³³ The South Africans felt that the only way they could maintain their sense of national pride and integrity was by resigning from the Commonwealth, which they did in 1961.³⁴ The departure of South Africa, against Macmillan's best efforts to retain its membership, left him deeply disappointed.³⁵ Privately, however, government ministers acknowledged that South Africa was an obstacle to the unity of the Commonwealth. Lord Home wrote to Macmillan to express his opinion that the Commonwealth 'would undoubtedly be happier and closer-knit were the ugly duckling out of the nest'.³⁶ Furthermore, the Americans ruefully acknowledged that even

though South Africa's stance on communism was welcomed, its obduracy regarding the retention of apartheid meant that 'in the wider context of the battle against Communism for men's minds in the uncommitted countries, South Africa is a liability to the West'.³⁷ Nevertheless, after South Africa left the Commonwealth, it retained its preferential trade agreements with Britain and the government was not penalised for its intransigence.³⁸

From the mid-1960s, the Labour government of 1964–70, which followed the Conservatives, continued to maintain cordial relations with the government in Pretoria. It was clear that relations with South Africa would not be disrupted by criticism from the AAM in Britain or growing international criticism. During a sanctions conference organised by the AAM in 1964,³⁹ Prime Minister Harold Wilson, informed listeners that the Labour Party was:

Not in favour of trade sanctions partly because, even if fully effective, they would harm the people we are most concerned about, the Africans and those white South Africans who are having to maintain some standard of decency there.⁴⁰

Furthermore, it was his view that to impose oil sanctions would be an act tantamount to war, to be contemplated only if aggressive action was taken by South Africa against Britain.⁴¹ The Labour government even refused to contribute to the raising of funds through the work of the UN, which sponsored the Defence and Aid Fund for political prisoners in South Africa.⁴² Because of the fund's association with the ANC and AAM, the Foreign Office under the Labour government expressed reservations. The reason given was that the fund aimed to help people who had been convicted for treason in an attempt to overthrow a government with which Britain had diplomatic relations. Suspicions about communist influence were still present, and Foreign Office officials argued that 'the Communists have to a considerable extent taken control of both the ANC and the AAM'.⁴³ The evidence for this assertion was never given. Nevertheless, this perspective was sufficiently ingrained to cause Labour government officials to be extremely cautious in supporting anti-apartheid groups. Contemporary records stated that although the Defence and Aid Fund was a 'respectable and liberal organisation [...] it does include Communists who of course seek to use

it for their own purposes'.⁴⁴ Additionally, the resistance to applying sanctions against South Africa was demonstrated even by Labour politicians sympathetic to the anti-apartheid cause. This was seen when Barbara Castle resigned as president of the AAM in October 1964, because her appointment as Minister of Overseas Development in Harold Wilson's government presented a conflict of interest when the AAM called for sanctions against South Africa. In her resignation letter she stated:

I am strongly opposed to our attempting to organize a vigil on economic sanctions because I am sure we should not get as widespread support among Labour MPs for that issue.⁴⁵

The next Conservative government under Edward Heath took a similar approach to its Labour predecessor, in not undertaking punitive action against the South African government. Heath's determination not to alienate South Africa can be seen during his North American trip in the early 1970s.

The British Prime Minister's visit to America in 1970

The British government knew that its stance on maintaining relations with the government in South Africa had the full backing of its most significant ally at the time, the United States. During the early 1970s, Prime Minister Edward Heath toured North America. On the agenda for discussion between the British Prime Minister, the Prime Minister of Canada and the President of the United States was the issue of South Africa and the wider southern African region. Despite South Africa's departure from the Commonwealth in 1961, the British government's continued relations with the apartheid regime had remained a source of contention between Britain and its Commonwealth partners. During meetings, Heath told US officials of his belief that the racial situation in South Africa would be solved by:

The gradual development of a commercial middle class [...] with a genuine economic interest in improving the position of the black African population [this] offered the best prospect of an eventual solution to the problem of apartheid.⁴⁶

In hindsight, the gradual approach seemed naive in the face of what was happening in South Africa. Not only was the political will lacking within the country but, a few years earlier, Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoerd had set the tone with his statement that ‘there would be no place for the African in the European community above certain levels of labour’.⁴⁷ The artificial and structured inequality between the races was manifested at the very basic level of the disparity between the quality of education provided for blacks and whites. It was also confirmed by the forced removal of Africans from the urban areas into the rural areas, which progressed unabated throughout the 1970s.⁴⁸ Furthermore, in the early 1970s, the real wages of African mine workers were at a lower level than in 1911. In fact, African unemployment increased during the decade. It was estimated that the unemployment rate of Africans had doubled from 1.2 million to 2.3 million between 1960 and 1977. Consequently, the rate of poverty and disease among Africans was the highest when compared to the rest of the population.⁴⁹ However, after the shock of the Soweto uprising in June 1976, reformist moves were proposed by the ruling Nationalist Party specifically to cultivate a modern and stable African middle-class that would help some Africans feel they had a stake in the society and reduce the chance of a recurrence of violent protest.⁵⁰

During the same tour Edward Heath met with the Canadian prime minister, Pierre Trudeau. Heath clarified his government’s position regarding South Africa, stating, ‘it was an indisputable fact that war with South Africa – even a trade war, let alone a military confrontation was out of the question; and a racial war was surely unthinkable’.⁵¹ Later on, in conversation with President Nixon, Heath told him that:

the British government did not support apartheid [...] did not endorse racialist policies, [however] the trade routes across the Indian Ocean were of major concern to Britain [and] we must continue to trade with South Africa, the Simonstown Agreement must remain in force and we must therefore continue to supply South Africa with spare parts and to take part in naval manoeuvres with the South Africa forces.⁵²

Therefore echoing the policies of past British governments, South Africa continued to be perceived as indispensable to British interests in the

region. Moreover, in the face of Commonwealth criticism, Britain was prepared, if necessary, to use its aid to Commonwealth countries as a 'stick' to control the more radical members such as Nigeria and Zambia, which threatened the break-up of the Commonwealth. Heath informed Nixon that British aid and technical assistance were important to black African countries. If they threatened to leave the Commonwealth or to withdraw their sterling balances, they might think twice if the British reminded them that in such circumstances British aid might be discontinued.⁵³ The veiled threat in this admission demonstrates the lengths to which Heath's Conservative government was prepared to go to sustain its relations with South Africa. Moreover, had anti-apartheid activists been aware of this aspect of the UK-US dialogue, charges of complicity in sustaining the South African government would have been levelled at both leaders. It is also clear that Nixon agreed with Heath's method of manipulating African leaders who might cause Britain trouble over its continued dialogue with South Africa. Nixon stated that he would make clear to African leaders who might look to the United States as an alternative source of aid if the British withdrew support, that:

If they cut adrift from Britain it would be no use their turning to Washington in the expectation that the US would take Britain's place [...] he judged that British policy in this matter was right and calculated to reinforce the defence of the Indian Ocean.⁵⁴

Furthermore, Nixon's contempt for African governments and his barely disguised prejudice can be clearly seen in his assertion that:

Black African states were ruled by emotion to a greater extent than most other countries. So far in human history there had been no genuine black civilisation [...] it would be wrong of the white countries, in assessing their own interests, to let their policies be influenced too much by the instinctively emotional reactions of black Africa.⁵⁵

Nixon acknowledged that rebuffing African states might push them towards the Soviet influence, but he believed that the Soviets would themselves struggle to 'assimilate' these states. From this exchange it is

clear that the British government with the support of the US government, even in the face of Commonwealth pressure, was not prepared to alienate the white minority government in Pretoria.⁵⁶ The Labour governments of Harold Wilson and James Callaghan followed the same trajectory in refusing to impose sanctions. During Callaghan's government in 1978, a Labour Party representative in attendance at the UN defended his government's voting record:

We voted against comprehensive sanctions together with France, West Germany, the United States and some other Western countries because we do not agree that the far-reaching economic measures which the resolution calls for would produce the changes in South Africa which we would all like to see.⁵⁷

This was clearly in line with government policy towards South Africa, two years before government minister Roy Hattersley stated during a parliamentary debate: 'I do not believe that a policy of general economic sanctions would be in the interests either of the British people or of South Africa.'⁵⁸ This statement was made one month after the Soweto uprising, where it was clear from the government's response that any challenge to its laws and authority, even by schoolchildren and youth, would not be tolerated. Furthermore, just before the Labour government lost office, its attitude towards trade missions to South Africa was expressed in the following letter written to Frank Hooley, MP, on behalf of David Owen, the Foreign Secretary:

The support of these missions does not in any way imply approval of, or acquiescence in, South African labour or racial policies [...] but trading connections cannot be dismantled overnight. South Africa is, moreover, a market in which our competitors are active and it could cost us *many jobs* if the government, by unilaterally abolishing support for trade missions to South Africa, were to deprive British companies for the means to maintain a competitive position.⁵⁹

It is clear that this viewpoint was shared by the most senior minister of the Labour government. The Prime Minister, James Callaghan, had written to the Trade Union Council that:

Britain trades with many countries with internal policies of which we disapprove [...] to restrict our civil exports – valued last year at £685 million would be simply a gift to our competitors without affecting or influencing the situation in South Africa [...] we are not prepared to go that far [...] a trade ban would do great damage to employment in Britain and to our prospects for economic recovery.⁶⁰

British governments, whether Labour or Conservative, up to the point at which Margaret Thatcher assumed party leadership and then political leadership of the country, deflected any criticism and refused to break relations with the white minority government in South Africa.

The Thatcher government and South Africa

Margaret Thatcher continued this practice of maintaining an open dialogue with Pretoria when she gained the premiership in 1979. She stridently justified her government's refusal to break relations with the white minority government. Thatcher differed from her predecessors in her willingness to argue robustly with her critics over the government's policy towards South Africa. She was totally convinced of her position and, in her forthright manner, said, 'if I were the odd one out and I were right, that would not matter, would it?'⁶¹ At the start of her premiership she declared in Parliament:

The policy of apartheid, with its emphasis on separating peoples rather than bringing them together, and all the harshness required to impose it on the South African population is wholly unacceptable [...] there is a growing recognition that change must come. It is in everyone's interest that change should come without violence. We must work by fostering *contact not ostracism* [...] we must not drive the South Africans into turning their backs on the world. We need to recognise the immensity and complexity of the problems they face. We must encourage programmes in working out solutions to these problems.⁶²

In this statement lay the blueprint of the Thatcher government's approach to South Africa and the apartheid state for the next 11 years.

What she did not mention explicitly was Britain's vested interests of trade, business and finance, strategic, geopolitical and familial connections in South Africa, which acted as a further incentive to keep the lines of communication open with the ruling white oligarchy.⁶³

At the outset of the Thatcher government it was evident that, in comparison to preceding governments, British priorities had shifted. It was obvious by the early 1980s that the grand vision held for the Commonwealth had paled. Its potential influence on British foreign policy and Britain's hopes for the organisation had receded. Britain's increasing role in Europe also meant that the sensitivity to Commonwealth opinion regarding South Africa that had once concerned previous prime ministers no longer held the significance it once did. The British government now gave priority to European interests. Mrs Thatcher did not spare Commonwealth sensitivities in her often contemptuous dismissal of their concerns regarding apartheid. Lord Hughes, the former chairman of the British Anti-Apartheid Movement commented: 'I don't think she respected the Commonwealth as a body, I think she found the Commonwealth irritating. It was almost as if she thought the Commonwealth was a white woman's burden!'⁶⁴ The Prime Minister was not alone in her scepticism about the Commonwealth's role. Increasingly during the 1980s, as the British government seemed on a collision course with the Commonwealth over South Africa, questions were raised within political circles and the media about the value of the Commonwealth to Britain.⁶⁵ Furthermore, the sensitive position of Britain and other European governments in relation to their support of the South African government was underlined when Francis Pym, the foreign affairs spokesman, noted that the white ruling elite in South Africa should:

Understand that this policy [apartheid] makes it extremely difficult for their potential friends in the West to support them [...] My message to South Africa is, 'help us to help you.' [...] the Conservative Party is completely opposed to the imposition of economic sanctions on South Africa.⁶⁶

Pym also argued that sanctions were counterproductive and would stiffen the South African government's resolve not to abandon apartheid. In his view, European economies would be undermined due to restricted

access to vital mineral supplies that sanctions would cause. Additionally, it would harm Africans more than whites and damage the South African economy and the surrounding regional economies that depended on South Africa. Current and potential British investment would suffer from shrinking export markets that would threaten jobs and increase unemployment in Britain. According to Pym this 'would give comfort to the Communists and those who seek a violent solution to the problems of Southern Africa'.⁶⁷

From the early 1980s, the argument that sanctions would punish Africans more than whites was rebutted by African critics such as the Archbishop of Cape Town, Desmond Tutu. For him the argument was a red herring, since in his opinion white South Africans had never been concerned about the plight of the non-European under segregation and the increasingly draconian laws of apartheid; therefore, the argument that sanctions would hurt Africans more than white South Africans sounded hollow. In Tutu's opinion, whites had consistently benefitted from black exploitation. Moreover, from his perspective, Africans would be prepared to suffer under the imposition of sanctions as they would understand it had a purpose to end once and for all the misery of apartheid. According to Tutu, there was a moral dynamic at play: 'we are dealing as much with morals as with economic issues [...] you do something because it is right, not merely because it will work'.⁶⁸

Despite this, from the outset the Thatcher government chose the strategy of persuasion and encouragement. The objective was to cajole a stubborn Pretoria to dispense with apartheid and negotiate a political settlement acceptable to representatives of the black majority. In short, South Africa and its white minority government were to be viewed as a recalcitrant friend, not foe. It would need support through the transition from its traditional practice of racial supremacy to a more racially egalitarian, liberal democratic society in keeping with modern states that made up the global community. The Minister of State for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Malcolm Rifkind, expressed the government's understanding of the difficult situation in which white South Africa found itself:

We are aware of the complexity of the situation and of the fact that it is not simply a matter of good and evil [...] the predicament

facing the white community is how to preserve what they regard as their way of life in a society that clearly requires fundamental reform.⁶⁹

The minister claimed that the British government wanted to guard against the wholesale destruction of the economic base of the country, which could potentially ruin the future of all South Africans. Sympathy for the predicament of the white community was usually followed by a strident denunciation of the ANC, the nemesis of the white government. Its use of violence to compel the government to curtail apartheid and negotiate a democratic system of government brought forth criticism from British government ministers. As the 1980s progressed, the government conceded that Nelson Mandela's release was a necessary step for Pretoria to take in order to make a reconciliatory move towards the ANC. However, ministers would not countenance giving ANC representatives an audience while the movement advocated violence against the apartheid government. In the mid-1980s, in response to a question regarding meeting with Oliver Tambo, the leader of the ANC in exile, a government minister stated:

We believe that the release of Nelson Mandela would serve as an important gesture of national reconciliation. It would not be appropriate to invite Mr Tambo for discussions in view of the fact that the ANC advocates the violent overthrow of a sovereign government with which we have full relations.⁷⁰

In response to calls for sanctions, Conservative Party politicians preferred to point to the opinions of homeland leaders in South Africa, such as Chief Buthelezi and Helen Suzman,⁷¹ who argued against sanctions on the basis that it was the black majority that would bear the brunt of this punitive action.⁷² The ANC's strategy of armed struggle and resistance was clearly anathema to the British government. Mrs Thatcher never failed to condemn the use of violence as a means to force the South African government into dialogue with the ANC. One has to understand her intolerance towards the use of violence in the light of British domestic politics and the low-level war between the British Army and the Irish Republican Army (IRA) in Northern Ireland throughout the 1970s and 1980s. The internecine conflict in Ireland was brought

dramatically to the British mainland in 1984 when the Prime Minister, her husband and members of her government almost lost their lives to the terrorist violence of the IRA during the Conservative Party conference in Brighton. In its aftermath, no distinction was drawn between opposition movements seeking to remove elected governments. Government ministers would often mention the ANC in the same sentence as the IRA and other paramilitary anti-government groups such as the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO). Therefore, the Foreign Affairs Minister told parliamentary colleagues that:

We have to take into account not only the ANC but other organisations of a similar kind [...] it is correct to mention the PLO [...] when an organisation is committed to using violence to try to overthrow a government with whom we have diplomatic relations, it is difficult to permit official government contact with such an organisation.⁷³

Claiming an understanding of the frustrations that caused Africans to turn to violence, the minister went on to state that nevertheless the government believed the use of violence would be a disaster for both blacks and whites. Unequivocally, Mrs Thatcher called the act of armed resistance against a state 'terrorism', and infamously labelled the ANC 'a typical terrorist organisation'.⁷⁴ For Thatcher:

Terrorism is the most direct form of attack on freedom. It involves both violence and the threat of violence to achieve political objectives. Even in an un-free society it constitutes an outrageous assault on lives and property [...] As for the ANC, we uphold our normal principle that we are absolutely against violence as a method of pursuing political ends.⁷⁵

Additionally, the Prime Minister argued that to control internal rebellion, 'it then becomes a matter of maintaining order and in those circumstances it is sometimes difficult to ensure that human rights are always respected [...] the terrorists themselves seek to provoke human rights abuses so as to polarise opinion'.⁷⁶ To anti-apartheid activists this sounded as if she was trying to excuse the white minority government in Pretoria its excesses against anti-apartheid opponents, while placing the

blame of government repression firmly on the side of anti-government opposition. Parliamentary critics of the British government's position interpreted the ANC's use of violence and its armed struggle differently. Lord Hatch argued that it was the apartheid state's brutal and unjust treatment of Africans and its denial of peaceful demonstrations that forced opponents to turn to violence because every avenue of peaceful change had been closed by the South African government. The government's continued rule by terror and intimidation by its security forces was leading the country inevitably to civil war.⁷⁷ Nelson Mandela's defence of the ANC's position on violence was that it was, 'not the oppressed who dictate the form of the struggle. If the oppressor uses violence, the oppressed have no alternative but to respond violently.'⁷⁸ This viewpoint was wholeheartedly endorsed by the more radical elements among black activist groups in Britain. As the following chapters will show, individuals who had gained their anti-racist awareness in fighting forms of discrimination and racism in education, employment and aggressive policing methods believed violence had to be confronted in kind. In South Africa's case, Mandela was arguing that, for the oppressed, violence was a legitimate form of self-defence. Geoffrey Howe, former Foreign Secretary, while not condoning the ANC's methods, conceded that Thatcher's view on violence was rather one-dimensional. In his memoirs he comments:

Margaret would quite rightly denounce the violence of ANC terrorism, but without ever acknowledging, even by the tone of voice, that the whole white-controlled repressive structure of the apartheid legal system was bound itself to provoke inter-racial conflict.⁷⁹

Though adamant in public that the use of violence to fight against an unjust political system was never acceptable, in private correspondence the Prime Minister was prepared to acknowledge to a Conservative backbencher that:

The exclusion of blacks from the political process has inevitably led to increasing dissatisfaction. Although not to be condoned, this has been a powerful factor in impelling black political leaders to seek by violence what is denied them by the laws under which

they live. The institutionalised discrimination and second-class status accorded to blacks in South Africa in the economic and social as well as political sphere continues to be an affront to the rest of Africa and to those of us who live in a free society and uphold its values.⁸⁰

Nevertheless, the government refused official ministerial contact with representatives from the ANC or other liberation movements that were campaigning for political change in South Africa. Demonstrating where their sympathies lay, instead links were made and maintained with the white business community in South Africa. Malcolm Rifkind, the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, visited South Africa in 1983.⁸¹ Defending his trip to apartheid South Africa, he noted that it was in keeping with the government's objective to maintain 'normal diplomatic relations with South Africa and support an important commercial relationship'.⁸² Government ministers were not prepared to actively dissuade British companies from investing in South Africa, despite calls to do so from the AAM.⁸³ Answering a parliamentary question regarding investment in South Africa, Paul Channon, the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, stated: 'The government believe that decisions on investments in South Africa, as in other countries, are best left to the commercial judgement of the companies concerned.'⁸⁴ The government would not interfere in the affairs of British business operating abroad, whether there was a moral case to do so or not. As calls for sanctions against South Africa mounted, the chairman of the British Overseas Trade Board, Sir James Cleminson, defiantly asserted:

{That} the UK has been reliable, probably the most reliable trading partner [to South Africa]. The UK has actively and successfully opposed, not just abstained from UN Security Council resolutions calling for sanctions [...] and even rebutted strongly attempts to interpret more widely the limited measures already agreed.⁸⁵

This public admission brought forth a strong letter of protest to the Prime Minister from Mike Terry, the executive secretary of the AAM. For Terry, this admission made Cleminson 'unfit' to hold such an

important office on behalf of British industry. What disturbed Terry and his AAM colleagues was the likely support that Cleminson would give to British industrialists and companies to maintain business links with South African counterparts. This was described as 'irresponsible', in the light of the fact that supporting trade with South Africa could have a negative impact on British trade elsewhere. Writing to the Prime Minister, Mike Terry stated that:

It could do irreparable harm to British exporters seeking markets in independent African states and other overseas countries [...] it could also increase the prospect of retaliatory action by countries which are currently imposing sanctions against South Africa.⁸⁶

This viewpoint and concern for British trade prospects were dismissed by the government. Clearly endorsing the approach of Sir James Cleminson to support business and trade with South Africa, the Prime Minister's private secretary replied:

The Prime Minister finds your references to Sir James Cleminson completely unwarranted. His speech was fully consistent with government policy towards South Africa.⁸⁷

Opportunistically, the Labour Party opposition in Parliament pointed out that the government's insistence on trade with South Africa and its refusal to isolate the white regime was due to the fact that the Conservative Party itself had backing from business interests that opposed sanctions and had Conservative Party members on their boards.⁸⁸ The Labour MP, Gordon Brown, provided names of 34 Conservative MPs with investment interests in South Africa, including the husband of the Prime Minister. Furthermore, he called for declarations to be made by Tory members of their business interests before taking votes in the Commons on sanctions. At least nine Tory MPs were revealed as having visited South Africa as guests of the South African government in 1984.⁸⁹

The reality was that some members of the Conservative Party who had business interests in South Africa were benefitting financially from a capitalist system that supported apartheid. Even though the government backed aid programmes in the townships, and sponsored schemes that were meant to provide Africans with the skills for a post-apartheid

period, fundamentally, British investment and trade with South Africa would not be curtailed. A few years earlier, during a Commons debate on trade with South Africa, Conservative MP Cyril D. Townsend commented:

The policy of Her Majesty's government is that civil trade with other countries should be determined by commercial considerations, not by the character of the governments of these countries [...] economic relationship in no way implies approval or disapproval of those countries' policies, internal or external of their politics we cannot allow our trade with a country such as South Africa to be reduced without endangering our own economic health [...] international trade is highly competitive and unless we strive to keep up our markets overseas and expand them, our competitors will readily take our place.⁹⁰

It is clear from the government spokesman above that throughout the 1980s British economic and commercial interests took precedence over any moral considerations of the character of foreign governments and their domestic situation. Furthermore, in a highly competitive international trading environment British trade and business interests did not allow sentiment to stand in its way. The long-term commercial objectives of British interests in the southern African region never altered and were clearly articulated in the observations of the Foreign Affairs Committee, which were based on the information provided by government ministers to whom it spoke:

In essence the government policy towards South Africa is to promote early and peaceful transition to a genuinely non-racial democracy and to further the considerable British interests in South Africa [...] direct British interests which we seek to promote and protect include our sizeable trade and investment and the welfare of British subjects resident in South Africa.⁹¹

In light of these long-term objectives, the British government, with the full backing of big business, wanted to ensure that the South African economy would in no way be irredeemably weakened, whether through punitive sanctions or internal rebellion.

The Anti-Apartheid Movement's dialogue with the Thatcher government

The relationship between the British government, its ministers and the AAM was characterised by mutual irritation, distrust and suspicion. Principally, disagreement arose over the pace and method through which the British government should pressure the government in Pretoria to dismantle apartheid and seek accommodation with the representatives of the African majority. As stated above, the British government's strategy of dealing with its South African counterpart was one of persuasion and encouragement. The Prime Minister commented in a letter to the AAM:

I am strongly of the view that sanctions would not achieve the changes we all are seeking [...] our policy is to use our contacts and links with South Africa to encourage, by persuasion and example a process of change. I am sure you will agree that you cannot influence somebody to whom you do not talk.⁹²

The AAM disagreed and advocated a 'carrot and stick' approach, or non-violent compulsion if necessary, to force the government in Pretoria to eradicate apartheid. The AAM's impatience to see the rapid end of apartheid sprang mainly from the contact and exchange of information that it shared with representatives of the liberation movement opposing the apartheid state. Throughout the course of its dialogue with various South African figures, the British government largely ignored the ANC, until the latter years of the 1980s when it became clear that the apartheid state could no longer function and the ANC was the only viable representative of the black majority – and had to be included in decision making on South Africa's political future. Throughout the 1980s, until F.W. De Klerk replaced P.W. Botha as prime minister in 1989 and the rapprochement between the Americans and the Soviets under the reformist leader Mikhail Gorbachev, British government officials continued to be influenced by the fact that South Africa remained sympathetic to the West and kept the Soviets and its allies at bay in southern Africa. The Foreign Affairs Committee acknowledged that:

It remains, and must remain, a priority for Britain Alliance policy that, whatever future system of government it chooses for itself, South Africa should remain firmly outside the Soviet sphere of influence and should continue to be allied, if possible more closely, to the defence interests of North America and Western Europe.⁹³

As had been the case since the introduction of apartheid, despite the West's purported unease with it, the fact was that white South Africa was readily welcomed into the Western alliance. Fears about the exact nature of Soviet support for the ANC and other liberation groups who sought the removal of white domination meant that throughout the 1980s for the British government:

The importance of South Africa as a source of certain strategic minerals is recognised and [...] it would be contrary to western interests for South Africa to become an area of Soviet influence.⁹⁴

It was against this background that the government and the AAM would clash over a number of issues. The matter of whether or not the application of sanctions would force the South African government to capitulate over apartheid proved to be the most intractable area of tension and antagonism between the two sides. It was through a series of pro-sanctions campaigns that the AAM was able to expand its areas of influence and support and turn itself into a determined campaigning machine in the second half of the 1980s, as it reached the height of mass popular appeal. It demonstrates the extent to which there appeared to be little room for common ground between the government and the AAM: both sought to ensure the end of apartheid but nevertheless saw the other as a hindrance in the international push for change in South Africa.

Sanctions

The correspondence between members of the AAM and government ministers, including the Prime Minister, can be best described as adversarial and often ill-tempered. The issue of sanctions, more than any other topic, caused contention between both sides. Repeating the sentiments that she expressed throughout her premiership, Thatcher believed that imposing economic sanctions against South Africa would

be 'a ridiculous policy and one that would not work'.⁹⁵ However, while the government viewed sanctions as a threat to established British interests in South Africa and the wider region, as well as to the economies of the West, the AAM argued that:

The policy of sanctions represents a minimal and non-violent programme of action, aimed to abate South Africa's aggression against the Front-line States, to secure South Africa's withdrawal from Namibia, and to hasten the elimination of the system of apartheid itself.⁹⁶

The AAM argued further that the British government had no right to justify its opposition to sanctions on the grounds that they would damage South Africa's neighbours, when the frontline states themselves voiced support for sanctions. The AAM stressed that it was a tiny club of Western countries with heavy investments in South Africa that vetoed sanctions in the UN Security Council. These countries frequently voted against sanctions, not the frontline states that had the most to lose.⁹⁷

The AAM also disagreed with the government's view that isolating South Africa through ostracism or sanctions would strengthen the resistance of those determined to fight against the increasing demands for change. Instead, the AAM argued that history suggested a different scenario:

Since 1959, when appeals for isolation of South Africa began, the South African regime has only sought to ameliorate its policies when it has perceived a real threat of international action and this would clearly be even more the case if any threat of action was translated in practice.⁹⁸

The AAM acknowledged that of all the European countries it was Britain that, due to its extensive investments, had the most to lose from agreeing to the imposition of punitive sanctions against South Africa.⁹⁹ Also, government officials warned against isolating Pretoria to the extent where it could be pushed towards either political extreme, Right or Left, potentially making matters worse. Government ministers frequently cited the example of Rhodesia as a case in point regarding the failure of sanctions. However, they failed to mention the Bingham

Report that had exposed the actions of British companies in South Africa, allegedly undermining the sanctions imposed against Prime Minister Ian Smith's regime by providing the Rhodesians with oil.¹⁰⁰ Ironically, during the Falklands conflict in 1982, the Thatcher government did not balk at using sanctions against its adversary, the Argentinians; neither did the Americans when it suited their foreign policy objectives.

The fact remained that without British cooperation alongside those calling for punitive action, a system of mandatory comprehensive sanctions against South Africa would not work. The significance of the impact that Britain could have was underlined by the deliberations of the parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee. The committee concluded that as South Africa's major trading partner, if the British government had chosen to exercise its political will to back sanctions, including those applied independently by British companies, things could have been very different. The committee observed that:

It is equally clear that the effects of total cessation of bilateral trade and financial dealings would have a proportionately much greater impact on South Africa than on the UK [...] after a while the sanctions would be likely to bite very hard, and no South African government would be able to ignore their effect in the framing of its policies.¹⁰¹

In the mid-1980s, the AAM agreed with this assessment, and in a memorandum to the government it argued that economic collaboration with the apartheid state in fact underpinned its whole structure. Moreover, as its largest foreign investor and major trading partner, Britain could play a crucial role in bringing Pretoria to heel. Reprimanding the British government, the AAM noted that economic collaboration sustained apartheid's war machine through the provision of loan and capital investment, the delivery of oil and exchange of technology. The AAM stated that it deeply regretted that, up to the present, successive British governments had not only been unwilling to seriously confront South Africa, but had even appeared reluctant to offend the government in Pretoria.¹⁰² In November 1985, the AAM organised a major sanctions demonstration and between 120,000 and 140,000 people took part, including local AAM groups, community

groups, trade unions and church groups. The momentum continued into the next year with events organised in towns across Britain. The AAM also continued to pressurise the British government with deputations and delegations to government ministers and politicians, and by sending letters, briefings and memoranda to government departments. Trevor Huddleston went to see Foreign Secretary Geoffrey Howe in June 1986 to present the AAM's arguments on sanctions; once more they received no concession from the government. Nevertheless, the AAM went on to organise a protest march and a 'Festival for Freedom'. Although the fight for Namibian independence was highlighted, the central theme was an appeal for sanctions against South Africa, and 250,000 people attended. The Scottish AAM redoubled its efforts to gain maximum publicity with a 'Sanctions Now!' demonstration and anti-apartheid concert to coincide with the Commonwealth Games in Edinburgh.¹⁰³

Sanctions as an issue had a high profile in Parliament, the media and public discourse. Mrs Thatcher, however, remained impervious. At a special meeting convened in London she refused to agree to comprehensive sanctions proposals by Commonwealth partners. Exasperated, the Commonwealth took action without her support. They introduced a series of sanctions in August 1986, alongside an extension of the EEC's ban on new investments in South Africa, and a ban on the import of iron, steel and gold coins, but not coal. The US Congressional overturning of President Ronald Reagan's veto of the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act and the total sanctions adopted by the Scandinavian countries in early 1987 signalled that the tide was finally turning against the apartheid state.¹⁰⁴

During 1987, the AAM chose the month of March as a 'Month of People's Sanctions'. Pamphlets and leaflets were distributed and included a 'Manifesto for Sanctions'. This was sent to candidates running in the June general election during which the AAM concentrated on 41 marginal constituencies, which gained local rather than national press attention. The AAM also continued its pressure on major oil companies such as Shell. In 1986, alongside American and Dutch anti-apartheid groups it launched a 'Boycott Shell' campaign, and support began to grow from local authorities, churches and community groups. Shell petrol stations were picketed and demonstrations were held at the British Grand Prix sponsored by Shell.¹⁰⁵ In 1988 Alan Brooks, the deputy executive secretary of the AAM, attended a meeting

in Amsterdam that planned an international campaign against Shell. He informed those present that the British AAM would lead a permanent boycott of Shell in Britain. The boycott would focus on local authorities and consumers picketing Shell petrol stations and boycotting its products.¹⁰⁶ The oil embargo campaign also targeted other British companies breaking the embargo and the AAM called for the ban on all exports of oil and petroleum products between Britain and South Africa. The impact of the pro-sanctions message upon the public was demonstrated by a Gallup poll survey that the AAM commissioned in June 1988. The poll found that 45 per cent of the public supported sanctions while 35 per cent were in opposition.¹⁰⁷ Reflecting concerns over jobs, support was low among the workforce. The AAM's trade union committee resolved to work more closely with trade unions to promote sanctions among its members. However, trade with South Africa rose in the late 1980s and the AAM highlighted this in a report it launched in the House of Commons in early 1989.

The AAM continued to participate in the wider international campaigns for comprehensive mandatory sanctions. At the UN in March 1988, the UK and US governments vetoed proposals for further sanctions, but the United States seemed to be moving closer to total sanctions. The UK government remained intransigent and isolated within the EEC. In Vancouver at the Commonwealth Conference in October 1987, the AAM lobbied the members and there were moves to widen and solidify the existing restrictive measures of the Commonwealth and other countries. The AAM distributed its own publication to coincide with a meeting of the Commonwealth Foreign Ministers Committee in Harare. The booklet 'Constrained by Sanctions, the Apartheid Economy in 1988' argued that minimal sanctions were already having a negative impact on South Africa and provoking a change of attitude on the part of its business class.¹⁰⁸ The AAM, in conjunction with its pro-sanctions campaigns, focused on exposing British investment and economic collaboration with South African counterparts. Former government ministers remain ambivalent and non-committal about the impact that sanctions had on South Africa. For example, Lord Carrington commented:

I don't think it was wicked not to put sanctions on [the South Africans]. I don't think it was wicked to put sanctions on. I think

it's a question of whether it was the right thing to do at that time which would be helpful at solving the problem.¹⁰⁹

Lord Howe provided more insight into the thinking of the Prime Minister and the rationale behind the government's misgivings over sanctions:

[Mrs Thatcher] did believe it was very unattractive to have people sitting in comfortable hotels imposing sanctions which had a harsh result on the very people we were trying to help. I think in truth sanctions did play a part obviously they induced changes in attitudes [...] intellectually we all had this feeling that sanctions were overrated as a means of producing change.¹¹⁰

One of Thatcher's closest officials has explained her intransigence:

[She] came to see British investment in South Africa as a means of developing the skills and potential of black workers and managers and so positively encouraging the dismantling of apartheid.¹¹¹

Of course this argument ignored the fact that throughout the highs of Western investment and economic growth in South Africa during the late 1960s and the 1970s, the South African government maintained its faith in apartheid as the only way to govern South African society.

The 'no-visa' rule

Another area of contention between the AAM and the government was the issue of the no-visa agreement between Britain and South Africa. The AAM saw this arrangement as providing a legal loophole and an opportunity for South African agents and spies to enter Britain and use the country as a platform from which to plan subversive activities against its anti-apartheid opponents. However, the British government did not see it that way. The AAM was persistent in its written appeals to government ministers to reverse the no-visa requirement for South Africans but their concerns fell on deaf ears. Government ministers did not waver even after the case of warrant officer Klue, and the 'Coventry

Three', who were tried in absentia for illegal activities after they fled to South Africa, where the authorities there refused to return them.¹¹²

Successive Home Secretaries refused to introduce visas for South African nationals. Home Secretary Leon Brittan stated that terminating the no-visa arrangement with South Africa was not viable. Writing to Robert Hughes of the AAM he stated:

I do not believe that terminating the no-visa arrangement with South Africa would be an effective solution to the difficulties you outline, nor do I believe that it would be practicable to establish categories of people who should be refused admission.¹¹³

Brittan argued that each case had to be considered on its own merits and that he would not hesitate to deny admission to an individual if:

I believed they were likely to engage in nefarious activities here [...] the general rule under the Vienna convention is that [nation] States are entitled freely to appoint staff to their diplomatic mission abroad. The receiving State has therefore the right at any time to decline a member of the mission staff [we] are fully aware of your concerns about these matters and will keep them under review.¹¹⁴

Brittan maintained this position despite a memorandum put together by the AAM detailing the illegal activities of South African agents and providing evidence of their activity exposed in television programmes.¹¹⁵ Furthermore, in a memorandum sent to the government, the AAM pointed out that from the 1960s there had been growing evidence that the apartheid regime was using the United Kingdom for its counter-intelligence operations. It stated that agents of the apartheid government used physical violence against AAM organisations in Britain and engaged in surveillance of, and gathered details on, opponents of apartheid in Britain.¹¹⁶ The AAM expressed its concerns that these agents could be engaged in planning assassinations. The report details the break-ins and harassment of anti-apartheid organisations in Britain. Referring to exiled members of the liberation movement living in Britain and its own members, it is noted that, 'there is now a genuine feeling of insecurity and fear for their own

safety amongst opponents of apartheid in Britain, as well as for the safety of the families of South African and Namibian exiles living in Britain'.¹¹⁷

The AAM provided examples of South African spy operations in Britain, and named individuals such as Ivan Himmelhoch, Craig Williamson and Gordon Winter. It quoted press reports as well as the bombing of the ANC headquarters as evidence of agent activity in London.¹¹⁸ The AAM argued that South African agents were encouraged to use London because, despite numerous clandestine activities that had been identified, no action had been taken against the regime. In its conclusion, the AAM stated that for more than ten years evidence showed that South African security agents, including very senior officials under the guise of diplomatic protection, had operated out of the South African Embassy. However, no action had been taken and the no-visa arrangement allowed the most senior South African security and intelligence officials to enter the country. This smoothed the path for operations within the UK as well as internationally. British officials had paid hardly any attention to such visits.¹¹⁹

The memorandum argued for a fundamental change of policy to ensure the end to South African intelligence operations in the United Kingdom and to stop the use of Britain as a base for such operations. The AAM called on the government to terminate the no-visa agreement, with added stringent control over the entry of South African nationals into the United Kingdom.¹²⁰ It provided a chronological table of allegations that, in its view, needed official government investigation into South African covert operations in the United Kingdom between 1971 and 1982.¹²¹ Although this memorandum contained serious allegations, the government did not initiate an official enquiry or expel any of the named individuals suspected of subversive activity. The AAM kept up the pressure; Trevor Huddleston demanded that the South African Embassy be closed due to evidence of subversive activities by agents based there. However, the Prime Minister's private secretary replied that it was never the policy of the government to close diplomatic missions in London because of disagreement with the internal policies or the human rights record of a particular country. Furthermore, he argued that maintaining the channels of diplomacy was 'a valuable means of communicating at a high level. We should keep such channels open to maximize our influence on the South African government's thinking.'¹²²

Despite the evidence presented, Douglas Hurd, the next Home Secretary, proved no less intractable on the visa issue. Writing to Mike Terry in reply to his complaint about the illegal activities of agents with links to the South African government, Hurd stated:

Where firm evidence comes to notice to support allegations of improper activities; this will be thoroughly investigated, and where allegations are substantiated action will be taken. The government will take firm action against those responsible for illegal or improper activities when clear evidence of such activities is found.¹²³

The no-visa issue continued to be a subject of dispute in the correspondence between the AAM and the government. Through determined persistence in its correspondence the AAM questioned the government on the entry into Britain of Captain Dirk Coetzee, former head of South Africa's death squads. Concerns were also expressed about the bombing of the ANC office in 1982.¹²⁴ In other areas where the government had agreed to apply pressure against South Africa, the AAM sought to ensure it did not renege on its responsibilities. Throughout the 1980s, for example, the AAM continued to suggest ways in which the government could tighten its policies regarding the sports boycott and its commitment under the Gleneagles Agreement.¹²⁵ A suggestion was also made to withhold funding for national sports bodies that refused to adopt measures to prevent their members from participating in sport in South Africa. It was all to no avail, as the British government refused to follow these strategies to increase pressure on the government in Pretoria.

‘Passing the buck’

Another unfortunate characteristic of the correspondence between members of the AAM and government ministers was the tendency of senior ministers, including the Prime Minister, to repeatedly claim that busy diary commitments prevented cabinet ministers from meeting with AAM representatives to discuss South Africa. They also delegated to junior ministers the job of answering the AAM's well-researched and detailed letters, reports and memoranda. This left the AAM with the

impression of being ‘fobbed off’ and not being taken seriously, and they expressed discontent at the dismissive and insubstantial answers provided by government ministers in their written responses.¹²⁶

The Prime Minister, in her correspondence with the AAM, claimed that behind the scenes her government, without recourse to harsh criticism, was pressing the Pretoria government to free Nelson Mandela.¹²⁷ It was becoming increasingly clear that he had credibility and held legitimacy in the eyes of the country’s black majority. Bishop Trevor Huddleston continued to press the Prime Minister to intervene with the white government for Mandela’s release. He also requested a meeting between the Prime Minister, himself and the 25 individuals who would be marching 600 miles from Glasgow to London to raise public consciousness of Mandela’s plight and that of his people.¹²⁸ The Prime Minister tersely replied:

We hope that the South African government will soon come to accept that if the peaceful national dialogue which we all want to see is to take place, Mr Mandela and other political prisoners will have to be released [. . .] I am afraid that I shall not be able to meet the marchers and you to discuss Mr Mandela’s release.¹²⁹

Although no explanation was provided as to why a meeting could not take place, the Prime Minister suggested a meeting instead with Lynda Chalker, a junior minister at the Foreign Office at that time. From my discussions with former government ministers, it seems that the AAM was regarded as rather a nuisance, complicating matters rather than helping to smooth the dialogue with the South African government. Echoing other ministerial colleagues, a former government minister commented:

[Within Conservative circles] yes the AAM were viewed as an irritant. They weren’t regarded as always helpful. They seemed to use deliberate confrontational tactics that were not always appreciated.¹³⁰

Former ministers seem to have regarded the AAM on the whole as more of a hindrance in their attempt to persuade members of the South African government to accept the eventuality of black majority rule.

Ministerial pique at the AAM can be interpreted as rather disingenuous in the light of the more than 30 memorandums, briefing papers, a plethora of correspondence and meetings that the AAM used to counter the propaganda emanating from Pretoria. For various government departments, they provided well-researched information about the reality for Africans, Asians and so-called coloureds living under apartheid.

Dissent among government backbenchers

Alongside these disagreements between the AAM and the government, from the mid-1980s there emerged a minority of Conservative politicians who were willing to express unease from the parliamentary backbenches about government policy towards South Africa. The overwhelming majority of Conservatives followed the party line when it came to the government's position. The former Conservative MP provides an insight into why there was almost universal unanimity among Conservatives:

Not a single member in the Conservative backbenches in the House of Commons was prepared to come out in favour for sanctions. Not one! They argued to me that sanctions would be ineffective. [Dissenters] would have been a tiny minority in the Conservative backbenches and they simply didn't have the courage to put their heads above the parapet.¹³¹

Moreover, he considers that the strong anti-sanctions and anti-ANC attitude of the Prime Minister ensured there was little dissent from the party line. The former MP hints that lack of racial and cultural diversity in the government led to a belief that Africans could not be trusted to rule South Africa. He explained:

The whole story starts with Margaret Thatcher [she] is one of those people who came from the sort of background where the natural order of things was that you didn't explicitly say or even explicitly think that black people were inferior, but in your heart of hearts you knew it. That's the sort of background that she and most Conservative MPs came from. [In fact] the whole view was coloured by the Thatcher attitude that ANC were terrorists.¹³²

Many people in Conservative Party circles hoped that a way could be found to reform South Africa's government and its racial affairs but without the loss of white control, or damage to Britain's economic interests or Soviet expansion in the region. The prevailing assumption was that black majority rule would lead to instability.¹³³ According to the left-wing press, typified by *The New Statesman*, 'For Mrs Thatcher, South Africa [was] a "white" country and she gives every sign of hoping that events will keep it that way.'¹³⁴ For one journalist, the Prime Minister's views about South Africa 'were a mixture of standard right-wing Conservative sympathy for South Africa as an economic entity, well-run, successful, attracting black workers from outside countries—and irritability about the self-defeating nature of apartheid'.¹³⁵ From the mid-1980s, as the situation in South Africa deteriorated with the violence in the African townships and implementation of successive state-of-emergency edicts, one Conservative parliamentary backbencher, Steve Norris MP, no longer felt convinced of the arguments put forward by his government against the use of sanctions to compel the South African government into a dialogue with African liberation groups. Writing to Foreign Secretary Geoffrey Howe, he stated:

In the past, I too have considered [sanctions] to be a rash move and I was prepared to believe that those worst affected would be the black community [but now] I am forced to conclude that our reluctance may be more based on the economic impact that sanctions would have on our investments there than on the economy of South Africa itself.¹³⁶

Norris did not go public with his unease and chose instead to write confidentially to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. He represented a growing minority of backbench Conservative MPs who had begun to have doubts about the government's approach to South Africa. One group on the Left of the Conservative Party was the Tory Reform Group (TRG).¹³⁷ Although the group rarely issued pronouncements on foreign affairs, its brief foray into public debate on South Africa was a sign of growing disquiet within some quarters of the Conservative Party. Increasingly during parliamentary debates, questions were raised about the well-publicised clashes between the government and the Commonwealth over sanctions.¹³⁸ Some Conservatives even suggested

using targeted sanctions.¹³⁹ Individuals warned of the possible long-term damage to British interests in southern Africa and the rest of the continent if the British government continued to be seen as backing the white minority government in South Africa until its position was untenable. Into this growing maelstrom stepped the TRG. During the mid-1980s, it issued a lengthy press release timed deliberately to coincide with when Commonwealth heads of government were in London discussing the impasse with Mrs Thatcher's government over sanctions.¹⁴⁰ The author of the press release, Peter Price, takes up the story:

The Press Association decided to pick up this press release from the TRG and give it major coverage and the result was that it got the main lead story of the 'Times' newspaper that day, and picked up the fact that leading members of the government were office holders of the TRG. I think it was much to their embarrassment although there were people on the Left who would never have been that far from me, but as part of Thatcher's government they would never have been able to say it.¹⁴¹

The press release momentarily caused a flurry of media attention as its contents seemed to run counter to the party line.¹⁴² The TRG called for tougher sanctions and argued that unless Britain considered its long-term interests in South Africa it could suffer an extensive trade boycott of goods by other African countries. It argued that when black rule emerged in South Africa possible retaliation against Britain could mean substantial economic losses for its vested interests.¹⁴³ Surprisingly, there was the acknowledgement that:

Apartheid has survived only because it has been allowed to do so [...] Britain's economy, strategic and political interests all require us to impose substantial sanctions against South Africa [...] perversely we are among the strongest opponents of such sanctions. Unless we look to our national interests [...] it will be too late.¹⁴⁴

Seemingly debunking all the old shibboleths, it argued that the fear that sanctions could make the conditions of Africans worse could no longer be used as a rationale for not supporting sanctions. This argument held

no credibility for victims of apartheid who wanted to see its demise by whatever means. If the British government took a lead with sanctions, other Western powers would follow suit because, 'the British Prime Minister is perceived by the whole world as holding the leading position'.¹⁴⁵ The TRG argued that although sanctions would have a negative impact on British exports to South Africa, the possible effect had been exaggerated and would only last for the duration of the sanctions. Not imposing sanctions would affect British trade in the longer term, and countering the argument on the difficulty of keeping sanctions in place, the press release notes that:

There are ways of doing so if the political will exists. It is growing fast in the US & Europe. If measures are introduced jointly and at a pace which matches that will, they can be effective [. . .] whether it is prosperity, security or influence we seek for our country, all will be jeopardised unless we declare our willingness to do what we can to end apartheid quickly and with minimum loss of life.¹⁴⁶

Furthermore, the TRG argued that the use of sanctions would forestall black South Africans from resorting to violence to bring the whole system crashing down and the country with it. They warned that if the black leaders chose to dismiss the British as impartial peacemakers in the new South Africa, Russia would happily take Britain's place of influence. Also, Britain's position in a predominantly non-European Commonwealth made disagreement over apartheid not only awkward and sensitive, but could mean that the Commonwealth's very existence 'would be severely weakened and might not even survive a growing division between Britain and the rest on this issue'.¹⁴⁷ Other than the initial media attention, this press release did nothing to change the government's viewpoint on sanctions. However, its existence shows that there was now a minority in the Conservative Party who were beginning to urge a rethink of the government's line on sanctions and recognise the inevitability of black majority rule.

Conclusion

The government under Mrs Thatcher never embraced the full-scale mandatory sanctions called for by the AAM or its Commonwealth allies.

In 1989, minimal sanctions agreed to by the European Community were grudgingly accepted by the British government. That year, during the Commonwealth summit at Kuala Lumpur, to spare Pretoria's sensitivities, Mrs Thatcher insisted on using the term 'measures' instead of 'sanctions'.¹⁴⁸ The Prime Minister reluctantly agreed to limited economic sanctions that included a ban on new investment and a ban on imports of iron, steel and gold coins as well as a ban on exchange of nuclear intelligence and new technologies. She vigorously resisted a total ban on economic activity and the disinvestment of British assets.¹⁴⁹

Despite the access enjoyed by the AAM to government figures, and its persistent efforts to inform and pressurise government ministers to take a firmer stand against South Africa, the movement had little effect in changing the Conservative Party's foreign policy towards South Africa. Conservative politicians with sympathy for the arguments of the AAM were an exception to the rule. However, the AAM was unrelenting in its determination to increase the pariah status of the South African government until it abolished apartheid. Moreover, the steady flow of documentation that emanated from the AAM's headquarters in London forced the government onto the defensive over its tolerance of the South African government. This was not lost on black British activists who considered the British government as the most significant sponsor of the white minority government in South Africa. The Prime Minister's statements and actions reinforced this impression and the left-wing British press observed during the time of Nelson Mandela's release that Mrs Thatcher 'identifies so closely with South African whites as almost to feel one of them'.¹⁵⁰ The Prime Minister showed a lack of enthusiasm for imposing sanctions against South Africa. She unilaterally rushed to lift the UN-agreed voluntary ban on new investment as soon as Nelson Mandela was released, despite calls from the ANC, the AAM and the Commonwealth to desist from this action. When the Prime Minister ignored these calls, she was roundly criticised for the early lifting of sanctions, and her action was described as 'immoral' and 'counterproductive'.¹⁵¹

The ANC and the AAM believed that sanctions should be left in place until the whole structure of apartheid was destroyed. Instead, Mrs Thatcher's rush to reward F.W. De Klerk, the new President of South Africa, for his bold step of releasing key members of the ANC, left the distinct impression that her sympathies were weighted in favour of

protecting British interests as well as making life easier for the unpopular white leadership and their supporters. Mrs Thatcher thought that her refusal to isolate South Africa, despite international pressure, had been proved the correct position to take in the light of Nelson Mandela's release by De Klerk. It was argued by the British government that only De Klerk could have taken this action, a stark departure from that of his predecessors, because he had not felt pushed into a corner by international condemnation without any support to make the changes needed.¹⁵² It was also argued that only the immediate lifting of sanctions would enable the country to regain normalcy and rebuild international contacts. Mrs Thatcher also began to voice uncritical support for De Klerk's call for the protection of 'minority rights' in the new constitution, without seeming to show a similar understanding of African concerns that this might be a further attempt of the white elite to hold on to power.¹⁵³ The differing perspectives between the British government and the AAM unfolded against the background of increasing unrest in South Africa. The next chapter examines the rivalry of the two main opposition groups in South Africa that were forced into exile, the ANC and PAC, their efforts to build up anti-apartheid momentum in South Africa and their attempt to attract the support of sympathetic allies in Britain. The AAM's continuing role in building and galvanising opposition to the apartheid state will also be discussed.

CHAPTER 3

THE ANC, PAC AND OPPOSITION TO APARTHEID IN BRITAIN, 1960s–80s

The last chapter described the maintenance of open communication between successive British and South African governments despite calls for South Africa's isolation by anti-apartheid opponents. The support of the British government was due to the perceived value of South Africa to the Western alliance and Britain's strategic, economic, military and business interests in southern Africa. Cordial relations between both governments continued despite the efforts of the AAM to expose the realities of living under apartheid through correspondence, memoranda and meetings with government ministers. Although the AAM tried to get the British government to increase pressure on the South African government to dismantle apartheid through punitive action, the British government resisted any measures that would destabilise the white minority government in South Africa.

However, factors such as shifting international forces and alliances, the steady reduction of international capital supporting the Nationalist regime, the growth in the influence of the AAM, and internal pressures eventually contributed to the disintegration of the apartheid state. This process has been well documented.¹ This chapter retraces aspects of this history in order to place into wider context the rivalry between the exiled ANC and PAC with their conflicting ideologies for change in South Africa and, in particular, the ANC's efforts to reassert itself as the sole representative contender to govern a truly democratic

South Africa. Further, the chapter will focus on the attitudes of black Britons towards the ANC and PAC. Significantly, despite the ANC's prominence as the main force within the liberation movement, many black British activists felt ambivalence towards it because of its stress on multiracialism for South Africa's future. This was out of step with the emphasis on black self-determination and independence from white influence and control that was the dominant theme among black activist groups in Britain. Some black groups maintained that this was necessary to correct the wrongs of the past, especially in countries with an African majority and European minority. However, as it became clear that the ANC was supported by the African majority, a gradual acceptance of the ANC's legitimacy to govern on their behalf muted their misgivings. The chapter will also focus on the activities of the British AAM to raise public consciousness about South Africa and its efforts to help speed up the demise of the apartheid government.

The chapter provides an overview of the efforts of the apartheid government to continue its suppression of anti-government opposition after the Rivonia trial in 1964. It will briefly highlight the turn to armed struggle, and underground activities of the ANC and PAC. Before turning to the themes highlighted above there will be a focus on the re-emergence of popular resistance in the form of the Black Consciousness Movement (BC/BCM) and subsequent challenges to the government's authority.

The rise of dissent

Apartheid's introduction in 1948 by the National Party was followed by the ANC's adoption the following year of its Programme of Action. In its stated principles, any form of white domination was firmly rejected and there was a call for political independence, which was a departure from the earlier respectful tone of the ANC that pleaded to be heard by the government.² The ANC called upon the people to demonstrate their resistance through protests, strikes and marches.³ The following decade was punctuated with defiant action against the onslaught of apartheid laws. The Defiance Campaign of 1952, organised jointly by the ANC and the Communist Party, used passive resistance to protest against the State's discrimination. The aim was to broaden

widespread defiance of unjust laws such as the pass law, and the segregation of public amenities. Nearly 10,000 people were arrested for protesting and, in the process, the ANC membership jumped substantially from 7,000 to 100,000.⁴

An important challenge to the government's determination to divide South African society along racial lines was the formation of the Congress Alliance. The alliance was made up of the ANC, the South African Indian Congress, the Coloured People's Congress, the Congress of Democrats and the South African Congress of Trade Unions. This alliance defiantly heralded unity across racial and class lines in joint opposition to the government. The culmination of this expression of racial unity was manifested in the Freedom Charter. In 1955, this document was presented before a gathering of what became known as the Congress of the People, where over 3,000 people met at Kliptown near Johannesburg. The charter outlined the fundamental principles of the struggle for political freedom and framed the struggle in terms of non-racialism and human rights.⁵ The charter was endorsed by all the member organisations of the Congress Alliance and the South African Communist Party. The government could not prevent the gathering as it broke no law at that point. However, the following year it retaliated by arresting 156 of its leaders on treason charges for 'conspiracy to overthrow the state'.⁶ The Congress of the People and the Freedom Charter were labelled by the government as communist. Although the state's charge was overturned by the Supreme Court in 1961, the protracted nature of the case effectively served to curtail the activities of individuals deemed to be a threat to the state. An unintended consequence of the case, to the detriment of the government's propaganda, was the fact that the publicity surrounding the trial provided a national and international platform for the declarations of the charter, which expressed the core ideologies of the ANC. The Freedom Charter remained the fundamental treatise of the liberation movement in opposition to the laws of apartheid.⁷ In parts of the British media, the procedures of the trial were reported to the favour of the ANC trialists. The justice system was characterised as having been corrupted by the apartheid government's agenda of repression. The trial was condemned as 'a mockery of western freedom',⁸ 'ill-famed',⁹ and 'a strange and [...] farcical exercise'.¹⁰ The Freedom Charter had its critics, for example, trade unionists who felt it did not go far enough in demanding worker rights, especially the right to strike.¹¹ The Liberal

Party saw its stated principles as going too far in its expression of a socialistic approach in calling for joint ownership of South Africa's mineral resources. The Communist Party's endorsement of the charter further reinforced this concern. Moreover, other left-wing organisations criticised the charter for not going far enough in its radicalism and commitment to socialism.¹²

The most serious disagreement came from the Africanists within the ANC who rejected the fundamental principle of multiracial alliance as expressed in the charter. Rather than seeking multiracial alliances in fighting the government, they stressed exclusive African leadership and self-determination and control of the political ideology in the fight for African political freedom. From this perspective, Africans by virtue of their indigenous status and numerical strength were the only people entitled to rule the country.¹³ The charter declared that 'South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white'.¹⁴ This expression of multiracial unity, and emphasis on the equality of the races and shared access to the resources and wealth of the land, flew in the face of the Africanists who sought the elevation of African interests above other races. In light of this, Africanists within the ANC rejected the Congress Alliance with the Indian Congress and the Communist Party.¹⁵ In 1958, these tensions and misgivings on the part of the Africanists led to a split, with the Africanists leaving the ANC and forming a breakaway group, the Pan-Africanist Congress, led by Robert Sobukwe under the Garveyite slogan of 'Africa for the Africans'.¹⁶ This action reflected the assertiveness of a group of impatient young Africans who did not share the conciliatory stance towards other races, as embodied by the leadership of Chief Albert Luthuli, who was the ANC president at the time. Furthermore, the stance of the Africanists was more in tune with the growing discontent and push for self-determinism in the rest of the African continent. African nationalism was on the march beyond the borders of South Africa, as independence fervour began to spread throughout the continent. This reality was highlighted two years later by the British Prime Minister, Harold Macmillan, in his 'Wind of Change' speech during his visit to South Africa. Famously, his sober warning was badly received by the white parliamentary audience who were not willing to give any leeway to African political aspirations.¹⁷

Although PAC's membership base was smaller than the ANC, it reflected the growing frustration of township Africans affected by the

harsh influx control laws that regulated the movement of Africans into and within urban areas.¹⁸ PAC sought to capitalise on this anger and discontent. Therefore, when the ANC announced a number of planned anti-pass marches, PAC called for direct action that would deliberately confront the authorities. This involved refusing to carry passes and converging on police stations on mass demanding arrest and throwing police operations into disarray. In March 1960, this form of direct action organised by PAC, in its attempt to pre-empt the ANC's planned demonstrations, was the catalyst that sparked the indiscriminate shooting at Sharpeville.¹⁹ This now infamous shooting sparked retaliatory strikes and stayaways around the country, which prompted the declaration of a state of emergency by the government. Simultaneously the government introduced legislation that severely limited or destroyed basic human rights within the society. The freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, association and movement, and even the right to life, were all stripped away from those who opposed the government.²⁰ Moreover, any individual or group seen as a threat to the state found the full repressive arsenal of the government – such as banishment, tortures, bannings, trials, imprisonment, exile even death – directed at them.²¹

Fullard has argued that from the 1960s state repression took the form of a combination of authoritarianism and legalism – where the legislation passed legitimised the abuse of opponents by the state.²² The 90-day detention law was one example of this, where it became legal for the government to arrest and imprison its opponents without trial. The emphasis on adhering to the rule of law obfuscated the often inhumane treatment of dissenters under laws that were clearly meant to suppress and counteract anti-government action. The widespread use of torture, accompanied with official denials, marked a decisive shift in the government's determination to eradicate opponents. The increased powers of the security police set a precedent in which there was full complicity between the different branches of the law enforcement system. According to Fullard:

At no stage were the security police subject to any checks and balances, or reprimand from either the state or the judiciary. They were simply given carte blanche to exercise their powers in an entirely unrestrained manner beyond the public eye.²³

The courts could no longer be relied upon to be impartial from the political governors of the state. Political protest through the courts was effectively neutered and justice flawed. The law was now slanted in favour of the white minority and the judiciary was compliant in maintaining the status quo. Evidence of abuse and torture presented before the court was given little credence, while the testimony of the security police was given full weight. Therefore, the state maintained a demeanour of legalism and attempted to distance itself from charges of criminal practices against people within its own national boundaries. However, in the eyes of the African majority the state had no legitimacy.²⁴

In the wake of this social unrest, mass arrests of ANC and PAC leaders followed, with the banning of both organisations, as well as detention without trial. Sharpeville had demonstrated the limitations of non-violent direct action, and both organisations were forced to turn to another strategy in opposing the government and its forces. In the following decade, state repression managed to contain internal resistance and leadership of the struggle shifted to ANC and PAC external missions outside the country.²⁵

During the social and political upheaval of the 1960s many anti-government resisters fled into exile and the ANC and PAC discarded their commitment to non-violent resistance, turning instead to armed struggle. For the ANC this meant the formation of Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) in 1961. This change of tactics was not an easy decision for the ANC due to its long tradition of taking a non-violent approach towards the increasing government repression. When the decision was taken by individuals in the ANC and the South African Communist Party (SACP) to use violence, the ANC was a banned organisation under the Unlawful Organisations Bill (1960). Therefore, a move towards armed struggle also placed the Congress Alliance under the threat of being banned. It became increasingly clear that the government sought to intensify its repression of Africans and other non-whites and squash dissent through its various laws and measures. A further factor that had a bearing on the shift to violence was the overall failure of the ANC's coordinated campaigns of the 1950s to effect political change after the moderate success of the Defiance Campaign. But the decisive shift to take up arms was largely due to the violence unleashed by the government to quell the peaceful anti-pass demonstrations by unarmed people. Nelson Mandela,

in his trial testimony, argued that not only did the violence of the government leave no other choice but to reply in kind, but that unless the thirst for violent revenge was harnessed and responsibly used in a strategic way by the ANC, only uncontrolled terrorism would manifest itself, leading to open revolt between the races.²⁶

Furthermore, clashes in other areas such as the township of Langa in the Western Cape demonstrated that the state's brute force, and the subsequent banning the next month of the ANC and PAC, signified it had no intention of moving towards a compromise with its opponents. In light of these factors, members of the ANC and PAC not only turned to armed resistance but began to organise and mobilise clandestinely outside the country, training men and women to infiltrate and form cells of anti-government fighters inside the country.²⁷

The building of international solidarity became a key part of the strategy to isolate the government. External missions were established in the continent and around the world to represent the struggle of the ANC and PAC to liberate the people. The government's determination to quash opposition appeared successful in 1963, when 19 members of the High Command of the military wing of the ANC were arrested at Liliesleaf farm in Rivonia after a tip-off.²⁸ The trial was widely publicised and in Britain there was broad media coverage, especially with a focus on Nelson Mandela, who had been charged with high treason and sabotage and who had distinguished himself with his opening defence against the charges laid before him. According to the *New Statesman* there was 'universal anger which [had] been aroused over the Mandela case',²⁹ while the *Observer* noted that though there was an appetite among African leaders for a multiracial society it was 'doubtful that this goodwill would survive the execution of Mandela and his fellow accused'.³⁰ Even the more conservative-leaning press such as the *Daily Telegraph* conceded that: 'It is the tragedy of the republic that it provides no way but violence for such a man to influence its fortunes.'³¹ For *The Times*, Mandela's spirited defence demonstrated that 'such sincere, outspoken testimonies against tyranny are [...] proofs that the government behind the prosecution must share in equity a grave burden of guilt'.³²

This sympathy that was expressed by political analysts and politicians in Britain and other European capitals, coupled with growing international pressure, may have had some influence on a judiciary wishing to be seen as unbiased and independent of manipulation by the

apartheid government. The judiciary's final decision was to give Mandela and his ANC colleagues life imprisonment rather than the death penalty, which the government sought. The leaders of PAC and the Communist Party were also imprisoned and given long sentences.³³ It seemed these anti-government groups had been dealt a fatal blow. The government went to great efforts to perpetuate the impression that the ANC had been destroyed. In the immediate years following the trial, reference to the ANC in the South African media was rare; censorship made it difficult to report its actions, although there were exceptions, for example when the ANC was referred to in a negative light. The ANC's existence outside of South Africa's national boundaries was also not reported except when reporting scandals of corruption or feuds. The Wankie campaign of 1967 received scant coverage, although MK's failure was made clear. Tellingly, Major-General Ron Reid-Daly's admission that MK and the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU), in alliance with the ANC, exacted heavy losses upon the Rhodesians was never made public.³⁴

In the aftermath of the Rivonia trial, which ended in June 1964, the arrests and trial had forced anti-government political and military activity of the ANC, SACP and PAC to go underground.³⁵ The harassment of anti-government activists in the form of house arrests, banning orders, random detentions without trial for lengthy periods under the General Law Amendment Act, and death while in detention became commonplace. In light of this onslaught against the government's enemies, what Mbulelo Mzamane calls 'a culture of fear'³⁶ emerged, which temporarily crushed African resistance. However, even though the minority white government appeared to have demonstrated its full control over dissenting voices, beneath the surface tensions were fermenting. From this juncture, anti-government political activity would emanate from clandestine underground activists. The ANC was not defunct within the country. Its existence depended on secretive organisational activities because detection by the authorities would have brought further harsh repression, which in its weakened state the ANC could not risk. Suttner argues that behind the longevity of the ANC lay its slow and steadfast rebuilding and restructuring without drawing attention to itself.³⁷ The organisation's National Secretariat continued to operate, even though disruption occurred due to members being detained or having to flee the country.³⁸

An important aspect of ANC underground activity was its assistance to the families of individuals who had been incarcerated by the government.³⁹ In 1964, in the period just before the arrest of the Rivonia trialists, the underground network was engaged in locating secure accommodation for those fleeing the government authorities. At this time, recruitment for the armed wing MK became a priority. Although there was concern about the noticeable numbers of people leaving the country due to the internal difficulties, the ANC leadership believed that external military preparation was essential. Interviews conducted by Gregory Houston suggest that Albertina Sisulu was involved in helping individuals from Soweto leave the country to receive military training and then to re-enter to pass on this training.⁴⁰

During the late 1960s, the underground activity of the ANC continued while the government attempted to crush it. From the mid-1960s to the end of the decade, it is estimated that 452 people were criminalised under the Suppression of Communism Act; 245 fell foul of the Unlawful Organisations Act and in one year, 1968, 54 were convicted under the Terrorism Act and another 80 convicted of sabotage.⁴¹ Any association with the ANC brought government censure; individuals faced indictment for continued ANC membership, organising ANC meetings, contributing or raising funds for the ANC, playing any part in its sabotage activity, or recruiting for the MK. In defiance, Albertina Sisulu and associates continued to send individuals out of the country, and clandestinely distributed ANC and SACP material to members of the population, as well as building a network of individuals who could contribute to and maintain underground cells of the ANC.⁴²

From the early 1970s, as released prisoners started to filter back into society and take up residence in the townships, the authorities kept them under surveillance. Unbeknown to the authorities, they were instructed to join local ANC networks and become involved in anti-apartheid activity.⁴³ Moreover, some argue that the later student revolt in Soweto in 1976 may have been inspired by some knowledge of ANC underground anti-government activity. Jacob Zuma, credited with building up ANC networks in Natal after his release from prison in the 1970s, suggests that rather than the ANC being dormant during this time, in fact he did not think there was 'any stretch of two to three years that there was no ANC trail'.⁴⁴ By implication, this in itself

demonstrates the ANC's continued challenge to the government at this time. In Zuma's opinion the 1976 student rebellion, although not orchestrated by the ANC, nevertheless had ANC influences:

[Although] the students were demonstrating [...] the students had had contact, and they always went back to the ANC to say, 'What do we do?' The ANC people [...] were actually playing a key role in that struggle.⁴⁵

This may be the case of a key ANC insider in hindsight trying to foreground the ANC as a factor of influence among the Soweto generation.⁴⁶ However, there is a case to be made that the released political prisoners influenced the thinking and culture of young activists. They brought the experience of opposing the Nationalist government, and insight into the underground functions of the ANC. Even during the period of the popularity of the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM/BC) in the 1970s, evidence indicates that the ANC was an active internal force and its literature was widely disseminated in BC circles.⁴⁷ Furthermore, the ANC provided the training for individuals who sought it. For example, court documents indicate that leaders of the 1976 Soweto student uprising had sought contact with ANC member Tokyo Sexwale, who was also operating as an MK guerrilla. BCM individuals such as Murphy Morobe received military training from Sexwale.⁴⁸ Furthermore, from the interviews of former BCM leaders such as Barney Pityana, it is apparent that:

[although] Pityana and [Steve] Biko saw a need for BC [...] there was extensive contact with ANC and general acknowledgement, especially on the part of Pityana, [and] widely in BC ranks, of the pre-eminence of the ANC as the country's liberation movement.⁴⁹

The rise of the BCM

After the banning and imprisonment of the leadership of the ANC, its pre-eminence within the anti-apartheid struggle appeared to be under challenge from new anti-government organisations that initially were not constrained by illegality imposed by the apartheid government. From the late 1960s, alongside Inkatha, the most significant challenge

to the ANC's hegemony was the rise of the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM/BC). Initially BC was given full scope to express its ideology of racial affirmation and self-independence until it was banned in 1977, when the government realised that its emphasis on African self-sufficiency and leadership went beyond its highly prescriptive definition of separate development.

The nature of the ANC's exchange with the BCM was marked by ambivalence. Although there was underground clandestine cooperation between the two, the BCM and its leaders were viewed by some ANC figures as possible competitors in the liberation movement. The BCM's heavy emphasis on race was considered by the ANC as too narrow without the added advantage of building a strong and solid organisation against the government. Nevertheless, some valued the BCM's strategy of reasserting African resistance, dignity and pride as well as adding the affirmative dimension of the innate value of African culture and a shared unity of purpose among the various ethnic groups within the African majority. This in itself ran counter to the government's separate development policy, which sought to differentiate between African ethnic groups to reinforce white hegemony. Furthermore, the ANC underground interaction with BC figures sought to influence BC groups towards support for the ANC.⁵⁰ The extent to which the BC leaders sought to replace the popularity and overall strong position of the ANC in spearheading the liberation movement is open to conjecture. Suttner has argued that from the perspective of a younger generation of BC adherents who came of age in the 1970s, and who may have been ignorant of the ANC's long history of resistance, their attitude towards the ANC depended as much on their own family history and experience of the ANC. According to Suttner, at times the BC itself lacked cohesion:

BC was in fact a movement whose direction was contested amongst its adherents, quite apart from many BC figures simultaneously interacting with ANC, admiring ANC or being in ANC structures underground.⁵¹

In some instances there appeared to be significant overlap between the ANC underground and the BC among student activists. The University of Natal had a liberal environment conducive to dialogue between ANC

and BC activists, alongside exchanges with others based on other campuses.⁵² In 1959 the government, in its pursuit of its apartheid agenda, had introduced the Extension of the University Education Act, which streamlined African ethnic groups into higher education institutions that catered only for their respective ethnic groups.⁵³ Ironically, it was at these 'bush campuses' as some African students disparagingly called them, such as the University of Natal, that renewed African resistance emerged from among students in the late 1960s. African university students had tried to get their grievances heard through the multiracial and liberal National Union of South African Students (NUSAS), which was publicly critical of apartheid especially on the English-speaking campuses, and of the government. However, many felt that even in this organisation many African students were subservient to white students. In 1967, Steve Biko, a medical student at Natal University, and elected to the Student's Representative Council, attended a conference that criticized the policies of apartheid. Members of NUSAS were present and white members outnumbered African members. Rhodes University, which hosted the conference, forbade the mixing of races in its accommodation and eating facilities. Biko publicly criticised this move and the failure of NUSAS to make a stand against this enforced racial separation, which conformed to apartheid policy. He was critical of its white members who preferred to adhere to the racial status quo. For Biko and other black students NUSAS only paid lip-service to racial equality but was not militant enough to stand up to the university authorities. Instead Africans needed to speak on their own terms and harness and direct their own struggle without white influence and interference. In 1969, out of this determination, an exclusively all-black student union was formed, the South African Student Organisation (SASO), to which Biko was elected the president. The union was established at a meeting at the University of the North, although students at the University of Natal also played a significant role in its formation. SASO declared its allegiance to the ideas of black consciousness and supported the activities of the BCM. In 1971, in an effort to attract adult support, SASO formed an adult branch, the Black People's Convention (BPC), which sought to take the ideas of black consciousness beyond the student body.⁵⁴

The BCM signalled the re-emergence of a new defiant spirit among the African population. It called for the repudiation of apartheid and

appealed especially to black workers and the youth. Signalling his growing radicalism, Biko explained his dislike of racial integration when he stated: 'I am against the fact that a settler minority should impose an entire system of values on an indigenous people.'⁵⁵ The BCM's assertion that African people should determine their own destiny and reconnect with their African culture gained popular support across campuses, and appealed to those who had experienced the inequalities of the Bantu Education, which imposed an inferior educational system on African students. Biko was also scathingly critical of the government's homeland policy, which he saw as a system to divide and rule Africans and lead them into the false belief that they had a say in their own affairs. For Biko, the homelands were 'the greatest single fraud ever invented by white politicians'.⁵⁶ In 1972, at a SASO conference, hostility was expressed towards African leaders who collaborated with the government within government-sanctioned institutions and the president of the BPC, Themba Sono, was expelled. Sono had called for an alliance with white liberals and for cooperation with selected homeland leaders to advance the liberation struggle. Biko saw this as a dangerous perspective and could not reconcile himself to work alongside homeland leaders whom he saw as pawns of white manipulation.⁵⁷ The core idea of BC was that race would continue to be a source of conflict and struggle in South Africa and therefore there had to be an affirmative reinterpretation of what it meant to be African within this context.⁵⁸

There was a recognition that the psychology and mind of the African was under assault from all aspects of apartheid ideology and that this had to be challenged head-on and redefined to uplift the African; moreover, the history of South Africa needed to be rewritten to give a more truthful account of the place and contribution of the African. There was a rejection of white liberals who, despite their empathy with the plight of the African, would always benefit under the system of apartheid and could never fully comprehend the oppression of the African in South Africa.⁵⁹ According to Biko, the system of apartheid still allowed them to 'skillfully extract what [suited] them from the exclusive pool of white privileges'.⁶⁰ As SASO became more politically assertive and challenged apartheid ideology, the government condemned it as a dangerous force and in 1973 confined Biko's movements to the King William's Town area of the Eastern Cape. BC leaders were put on trial and Biko testified on their behalf in a manner that further publicised the philosophy of black consciousness.

The influence of the BCM had spread among African communities across South Africa and emerged as a catalyst for black empowerment during the 1970s.⁶¹ Through its community programmes, the movement sought to train people who could mentor others to create and sustain a level of self-sufficiency. Initially the leaders of the BCM sought to avoid confrontation with the government, in order to establish itself before any adverse government action affected its activities. BCM activists recognised that if a formal and structured organisation was in evidence then the police would immediately move to destroy its activities. The objective was to use their programmes to inculcate the essential qualities of responsibility and organisation, while nurturing the skills of individuals to use in ways 'that would maximize their social capital'.⁶² Recognising that the struggle for political equality might take a long time, BC activists sought to embed its sponsored programmes in the community. The objective was to enable Africans to be independent materially and intellectually from white influence, while drawing on what might be of use from the white world. Mzamane writes: 'BC was striving [...] to develop a unique organisational philosophy and set of strategies not only on how to stand on one's own feet but also how to work with other people without being used by them [...] BC was never anti-white; it was pro-black.'⁶³ BC activists lay emphasis on the intellect – the ability to think for oneself and to make decisions free from white patronage, and to remember the slogan 'Black Man You are On Your Own!' This was to underline the need to cultivate the ability of black communities to function in a self-sufficient way. The BCM began therefore to encourage the growth of self-help grass-roots organisations, providing training, skills and affirmative inspiration. The emergence of BC introduced a fresh energy into the resistance struggle. As Mzamane argues:

The founders of the BCM were not interested in ideas only but also in organisation. Everything they did was aimed explicitly at laying a foundation for blacks to organise effectively. They stressed self-reliance, assertiveness and self-confidence as prerequisites for blacks to take control of the task of liberation.⁶⁴

There were workshops where organisation and leadership skills were taught, including the essential features of public organisation such as

running meetings, raising funds, minute taking, putting together publications. These strategies instilled confidence in black self-sufficiency and equality and removed the sentiment of the need of white patronage and 'the superior-inferior white-black stratification that makes the white a perpetual teacher and the black a perpetual pupil'.⁶⁵ According to one observer, the BCM served a dual purpose in that it became a 'doctrine of self-emancipation and a strategy for escape from the political doldrums into which South Africa had been cast in the 1960s'.⁶⁶ Under the BCM there arose a new generation of leaders steeped in a philosophy of self-reliance that negated any sense of victimhood.

By the late 1970s, the BCM was an integral part of the thinking and iconography of liberation. BC had nurtured a new spirit of militancy and defiance that fired the imagination and consciousness of people, their ability and capacity to bring about change, which would finally be fully realised in the late 1980s. Furthermore, there arose a desire for linkage between the BCM and the exile-based liberation movement; this was seen in the attempt to build a united front against apartheid. In the mid-1970s, it was proposed by all concerned that a collaborative alliance could be formed between the BCM, ANC, PAC and other anti-apartheid groups. Especially after the Soweto uprising in 1976 and the banning of BCM groups there was a sense of urgency to follow through with such a plan. However, after a series of false starts this plan never came to fruition. For example, in February 1974, a meeting between a BCM group and a representative group from the ANC led by Thabo Mbeki in Gaborone was suspended when a member of the BCM delegation was blown up in a bomb explosion the day before.⁶⁷ At the end of the year and into the next, contacts were made between Griffiths Mxenge and Harry Gwala of the ANC, Robert Sobukwe and Zephania Mothopeng of the PAC, Steve Biko of the BCM and externally based Oliver Tambo, the acting president of the ANC, and others. However, the momentum for creating a 'new front' of resistance did not result in a coordinated plan of cooperation.⁶⁸ Each organisation found itself in a difficult situation of transition. Each sought to firmly establish itself and move the struggle forward. How to do so, without giving opponents the edge, was the challenge. The desire for a united front remained even after Biko's untimely death in 1977. In response to Biko's murder, Tambo stated:

Our people have been stunned by the brutal murder of Steve Biko [...] in the fullness of time the criminals will receive their deserved punishment [...] in the meantime, and as a duty we all owe to his martyrdom, we must pursue the efforts, in which he was deeply involved, to galvanize our fighting people into a united revolutionary force.⁶⁹

Two years later, in June 1979, the BCM and ANC finally met. Barney Pityana led the BCM delegation and the ANC was led by Oliver Tambo. Critics within the BCM, however, saw this meeting as an attempt by the ANC to draw the BCM under its influence and control.⁷⁰ Afterwards, Pityana concluded that there was not a need for a separate cooperative organisation.⁷¹ Moreover, there seemed to be a considerable amount of movement between the two organisations. In time, BCM prisoners on Robben Island switched to the ANC, as did underground activists, and individuals in exile. This inter-group movement continued until a growing momentum of defiant opposition emerged in the mid-1980s under the banners of illegal anti-apartheid groups such as the United Democratic Front (UDF).

A further complicating factor was that divisions began to develop between those who saw BC as a strategy towards political freedom and those who saw it as an independent force. Those who saw BC as an independent force, and not an entity that would eventually give way to the more established anti-government groups such as the ANC, reconfigured themselves in the early 1980s as the Black Consciousness Movement of Azania.⁷² Those within the BCM more sympathetic to the ANC eventually joined the organisation, and those with sympathies with PAC joined it. However, Steve Biko's death and the banning of BC groups in 1977 by the government led to the demise of the BCM as an effective anti-government force.

The re-emergence of African opposition

During the 1970s, the ANC began to slowly rebuild support inside South Africa and internationally. It stressed multiracialism and received financial support for non-military activity from Scandinavian countries and military support from the Soviets and Eastern bloc.⁷³ Internally opposition began to grow inside South Africa and discontent was

manifested in the labour strikes in Durban in 1973, the rise of BC was then dramatically exposed with the Soweto uprising in 1976.⁷⁴ Soweto proved to be a watershed for the revival of internal dissent; it benefitted the ANC more than PAC in terms of raising its internal profile and building on the growing dissatisfaction of the black majority. At the time, PAC's underground presence in South Africa was negligible. Meanwhile, the ANC was taken by surprise as much as the rest of the world by the youth revolt; as noted above, it had an underground presence in the country that aided and received the thousands of fleeing youngsters who could be militarily trained to fight against the apartheid state.⁷⁵ The violent response of government troops to protesters in Soweto and around the country awakened the international community to the true nature of the apartheid government.

In the aftermath of Soweto, largely as a counter to its international critics, the government attempted reform. This was done through implementation of a flawed multiracial constitution that discounted the black majority and instead provoked further anti-government protests. In 1983, in addition to introducing the tricameral parliament with its supposedly multiracial constitution, the government implemented further reforms to ameliorate domestic discontent while essentially preserving white domination.⁷⁶ Laws were passed that ultimately would not threaten the status quo but would enable selected beneficiaries to feel they had a stake in the opportunities that the state provided. Therefore, for the first time laws were passed permitting African residents in townships to buy rather than only rent their own homes. In spite of these adjustments to apartheid law, anti-government forces continued to increase. In 1983, the National Forum (NF) was established to oppose the state. This forum was comprised of Africanist groups that had links to PAC, BCM and the Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO). During the same year, another anti-government movement was formed that would have wide-ranging consequences. Thousands of black South Africans met in Cape Town to create a new legal anti-apartheid federation. Calling itself the United Democratic Front, this organisation was made up of over 200 civic organisations that included youth leagues, labour unions, church groups and women's associations. The UDF publicly renounced violence as a means to achieve multiracial democracy and stated that it was not a stalking horse for the ANC. In reality, ANC support was strong among the rank and file and its leaders, such as

Adelaide Tambo, had strong personal links to the ANC. The UDF positioned itself as the major representative of collective resistance, which included a broad range of people willing to defy the state.⁷⁷

In 1985, the formation of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) with 500,000 members ready to support the political struggle against apartheid further strengthened internal opposition. The labour unions had been legalised by the government in 1979. This was mainly in recognition of the fact that the economy increasingly relied on African labour, especially skilled African workers who could not be easily replaced during strikes. The government rationale was that the legalisation of these unions enabled employers to negotiate with an identifiable union leadership and to facilitate agreements before costly strikes erupted. Yet although the regime hoped to restrict the unions to purely economic activity, the reality was that union members were highly politicised and actively opposed apartheid, and the majority supported the ANC.⁷⁸ Indicating its potential power, COSATU grew to an estimated 600,000 members in a few months and, despite a declared independence of the ANC, leaders of COSATU expressed similar aims, and announced their support for 'socialist aims and principles'.⁷⁹ The ANC managed to maintain links internally and enjoyed support from the UDF and COSATU. One analyst argues that this was ultimately advantageous for the ANC because:

Thanks to its coalition with the UDF and COSATU [...] the ANC benefited [...] from a wave of mobilization inside South Africa that it had not initiated [...] it must be underlined that black people in South Africa still had strong confidence in the organization because of the presence of its underground structures, including the 'above ground' radio broadcasts, as well as its armed presence in the region.⁸⁰

In 1985, at Kabwe in Zambia, at an ANC-sponsored conference, 250 delegates attended from at least 21 external ANC missions.⁸¹ Out of this conference, the ANC stated it would not seek a settlement with Pretoria but would fight to ensure a transfer of power to black leadership after the apartheid government was removed. The ANC advocated a 'People's War' to increase the intensity of the internal revolt to bring the apartheid government to an end.⁸² Simultaneously, in South Africa, the

government began to remove laws that had formerly intervened in the private lives of its citizens, largely in an effort to demonstrate its willingness to implement societal change. Therefore, in 1985, the anti-miscegenation law was repealed and legalised. For the first time in 36 years, marriages between people of different races was no longer illegal. Then in 1986 the pass laws, a fundamental feature of apartheid, was repealed. However, these palliatives did not halt demands for the total removal of apartheid laws.⁸³ The ANC's growing support from the African majority and its heightened visibility abroad, especially in forums such as the UN, ensured increasing international recognition and, in 1986, incarcerated leaders in South Africa, including Nelson Mandela, met with the visiting Eminent Persons Group of the Commonwealth.⁸⁴ Not long after, and perhaps reflecting a realisation by the British government that the ANC could not be ignored in the future political dispensation of South Africa, an invitation was made to the exiled ANC president Oliver Tambo, who was based in London, to meet the British Foreign Minister for discussions about the situation in South Africa.⁸⁵ Representatives from across the political divide in South Africa were invited to explain the internal situation to British parliamentarians. Representatives of the ANC such as Tambo, Thabo Mbeki and Aziz Pahad, members of the PAC, Inkatha and the National Party, and British ministers with experience of South Africa, testified before a Foreign Affairs Committee. In responding to questions from a select panel, participants had an opportunity to present publicly in a non-hostile environment the political and ideological motivations that had shaped their respective organisations and actions, and to articulate their perspectives on a post-apartheid future in South Africa.⁸⁶

In early 1987, Tambo also met with the US Secretary of State George Shultz, and with South African business leaders who were disturbed by the slow pace of political reform. These leaders took the initiative to meet with ANC representatives to informally discuss the worsening crisis in the country.⁸⁷ These meetings heralded the ANC's growing significance and the recognition on the part of London and Washington that South Africa's political future would have to include the ANC. In the same year the South African government, unable to tolerate the growing internal support for the UDF, banned the organisation, which promptly re-emerged as the Mass Democratic Movement (MDM), and was similar in scope to the UDF.⁸⁸

Another significant source of declared anti-apartheid support was the ethnic and culturally focused Zulu Inkatha yeNkululeko ye Size (National Cultural Liberation Movement), founded during the mid-1970s by Chief Mangosuthu Gatsha Buthelezi. This organisation was based on an earlier Zulu cultural association founded in 1928. The later configuration was renamed the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), and from 1975, under Buthelezi's leadership, Inkatha became the ANC's nemesis and its rivalry with the ANC was fully exploited by the white minority government.⁸⁹ Initially, Buthelezi promoted Inkatha as a national liberation movement. In fact, he had been a member of the ANC. However, ambition and internal disputes alienated him to the point where he left and began to direct his energies into building Inkatha into an alternative force in the country. Relations worsened between Buthelezi and the ANC when Buthelezi was physically attacked in the late 1970s by ANC supporters during his attendance at the funeral of Robert Sobukwe, the leader of PAC.⁹⁰ He was accused of being a stooge and collaborator with the white minority government, despite his initial refusal to agree to homeland status for Kwa Zulu Natal. Nevertheless, he pursued divisive politics and appealed to Zulu speakers to uphold their tribal tradition and loyalty to Zulu culture before any other commitment.

In contrast to supporters of the ANC who sought to opt out of any government-sponsored system, Buthelezi instructed the Inkatha Youth League not to boycott schools, which he argued were under the KwaZulu administration rather than the derided Bantu Education, which was under the control of the government. From the late 1970s, Buthelezi distanced himself from the ANC and later the UDF as he forged an image as a moderate leader with a national constituency. There was essentially one-party government in KwaZulu Natal, and Inkatha controlled housing, pensions and water in the townships while using this monopoly to demand support from the people. Individuals found that to climb the career ladder one had to join the Inkatha Party. From the mid-1980s, Natal became a major site of conflict between black communities as Inkatha tried to enforce its authority over Zulu-speaking areas; Zulu gangs of Inkatha supporters clashed in Natal with Zulu supporters of the UDF and ANC.⁹¹

From 1987 to 1990, fierce battles erupted between townships and settlements of these supporters around Pietermaritzburg. In general,

unrest and violence were rapidly spreading across the country. Between June 1986 and September 1988, it was estimated that over 100 explosions had caused 31 deaths and 565 injuries in the public areas of major cities.⁹² The following year there was more violence: attacks against representatives of the government, including black policemen and councillors; school and bus boycotts; worker stayaways; and clashes between the police and township dwellers. Buthelezi criticised the ANC for its resort to violence to force the white government to the negotiating table and its stance on sanctions against South Africa. Mirroring the arguments of Pretoria and international investors, Buthelezi argued that sanctions would hurt indigenous Africans.⁹³ Unsurprisingly with these views, Buthelezi was fêted by the government in Pretoria and praised as an example of responsible African leadership. To Western leaders like Mrs Thatcher, he seemed the only credible African moderate alternative to the socialistic ANC, especially as he spoke in favour of the capitalist economy.⁹⁴ According to former Foreign Affairs Minister Geoffrey Howe:

[Mrs Thatcher] saw Buthelezi as a more hopeful candidate for change. He wasn't pro-violence or pro-sanctions either. He therefore chimed intellectually more closely with her. He delivered very powerful speeches and his input was certainly very hostile to apartheid. He argued that case and probably helped to influence Margaret.⁹⁵

Douglas Hurd similarly explains his experience of Buthelezi's charisma:

I always found him a fascinating character [...] I had long talks with him. He's one of those people you always have to let talk and talk and try and put in a word when you can. Some regarded him as a spiritual figure. I never thought that.⁹⁶

Buthelezi was determined to lead the fight against apartheid on his own terms and essentially from a power base that favoured his political and ethnic interests. Disturbingly for the ANC, he was willing to make independent moves towards a common ground of agreement with the white leadership as long as his ethnic power base was maintained. At one time, Buthelezi and the Inkatha leadership considered a form of power

sharing with whites that fell short of a fully democratic system. This endeared him to white conservatives while members of the ANC leadership and its grass-roots supporters were as viscerally opposed to Inkatha as they were against the apartheid regime. The government in South Africa tolerated Inkatha's promotion of Zulu culture, as this emphasis divided the interests of African unity advocated by the ANC. After the elections of 1994, it transpired from subsequent disclosures that the ANC members' suspicions of Buthelezi's complicity with the apartheid government were not unfounded. At the post-apartheid Truth and Reconciliation Commission, evidence came to light that some Inkatha supporters, with Buthelezi's knowledge, had been aided by white security units in their attack and murder of hundreds of ANC supporters.⁹⁷ These conflicts had fuelled the so-called 'Black on Black' atrocities that marked the last years of the apartheid government and provided fodder to white separatists who suggested that this showed the brutality and uncivilized nature of Africans.

The ANC and PAC: the struggle for international recognition and support

In exile, the ANC attracted widespread international support because of its 'broad church' approach. The ANC always sought alliances with a range of groups and organisations opposed to apartheid. This included domestic support from the Communist Party banned in 1950, and the South African Liberal Party, dissolved in 1968, when multiracial parties became illegal. Internal divisions over the ANC's stance on communism and white membership caused controversy even after disgruntled members left to form PAC in 1959. The Morogoro Conference in 1969 attempted to resolve these issues, which had the potential to split the movement. At this conference, the decision was made to formally accept white membership although whites were still barred from the national executive. Controversy surrounding the influence of white members continued and, in 1975, ANC member Tennyson Makiwane and eight others were expelled because of their attack on white communists perceived by them to have too much influence on the ANC leadership.⁹⁸

PAC's stance on anti-communism was in reality a critique of the influence of the Congress of Democrats and the Communist Party on the

ANC. According to an ANC exile in Britain, later a South African High Commissioner to London:

When the Congress of the People took place in 1955, PAC felt it was a document inspired by Marxism and Communism and they felt that Marxism and Communism was an alien ideology to South Africa, which emanated from Russia. Progressive white people formed themselves into an organisation called the Congress of Democrats. The COD had people like Ruth First and Joe Slovo and others. [These] prominent white people were also very prominent in the ANC [...] therefore what PAC were saying was that white people were part of the problem and not part of the solution. They felt that white people could not play a role and therefore could not define themselves as Africans.⁹⁹

According to the Commissioner, PAC's objection was based on the deliberate misunderstanding of the charter that came out of the Congress of the People and a refusal to accept that progressive whites could have a part to play in the liberation. He argues:

The Freedom Charter that came out of the Congress of the People did not call for a classless society, it did not call for a Marxist–Leninist state, it did not call for the establishment of a communist society [...] it was merely a statement of what the aspiration of black people should be for the future. The unfortunate problem for PAC was that the Freedom Charter was seen as a communist document or at the very least communist inspired [...] our position was that whites are nationals of South Africa. All they needed to do was to declare themselves as patriotic South Africans.¹⁰⁰

His view of the revolt of former ANC members citing the influence of communism on the congress, their distaste for the ANC's multi-racialism, and the subsequent competition between the ANC and PAC for legitimacy in the eyes of the African people and the rest of the world has been analysed by writers such as Tom Lodge, Scott Thomas and others.¹⁰¹ According to a recent interpretation drawing on extensive interviews with former members, PAC's internal rivalries and instability lost opportunities for building unity and strength in exile.¹⁰²

Furthermore, the former Commissioner hinted at the incongruity of PAC's anti-white position when, 'some of the backers of PAC were white people [such as members of the Armed Resistance Movement . . .] where they were getting their guns'.¹⁰³ Despite exceptions such as Patrick Duncan, who became a member in 1963, PAC argued that white participation in the liberation movement could alienate the African majority.¹⁰⁴ It can be argued that PAC leaders more than their ANC counterparts bore the brunt of white racism and superiority while the ANC elite mixed with white liberal-minded anti-racist progressives, which may have influenced their more accommodating view of white allies. To sustain the support of the people, African leaders had to be seen to be fully identified with their struggle. PAC called for African nationalism to reverse the years of African inferiority sustained by white domination. Through its appeal for a strong national identity, it sought to mobilise African support.¹⁰⁵

Aside from the racial power dynamics that concerned PAC when it criticised the role of whites in the ANC, the influence of communism also provoked strong feelings. Since many whites in the Congress Alliance were members of the SACP, it was assumed they would have direct contact with Moscow, which widened the scope for external interference and influence. Despite the lack of direct evidence, Africanists remained suspicious as they sought to keep the struggle African-led. Significantly, although the Communist Party in South Africa had dissolved before the introduction of the Suppression of Communism Act in 1950, it continued to exist underground as the SACP. Moreover, a number of young African intellectuals in the ANC were attracted to Marxism and the discipline and rigour of argument that the SACP articulated.¹⁰⁶

PAC's pan-Africanist message was in tune with the surge for independence in other parts of Africa. This was made clear at PAC's inaugural meeting when Kwame Nkrumah and Sekou Toure sent their greetings. For newly independent African countries and black activists in the West, their sympathy for PAC lay in its interpretation of Africanism, which excluded whites. This resonated with the ideology of the Pan-African Movement that was sweeping across most of the African continent. PAC argued that the need to remove white domination in South Africa was no different from the fight against white colonialism in the rest of the continent.¹⁰⁷ PAC emphasised the suffering of African

people under white colonial oppression throughout the continent. It sought to replace white political power with African political control and power. The ANC's multiracialism as manifested in the variety of ethnic groups that formed the Congress Alliance, and that had put together the Freedom Charter, was seen as a dilution of the African nationalist sentiment to seize back control of their ancestral land. PAC's critique of white influence within the structure of the ANC concentrated on the key strategic positions held by individual white members. When the ANC's armed wing was formed in 1961, membership was opened to whites who were also communists and these individual white members held strategic positions. For example, Arthur Goldreich and Joe Slovo, both SACP members, were the architects of the sabotage campaign and main driving force of Umkhonto we Sizwe, the armed wing of the ANC, during the state of emergency that was enforced by the government after the Sharpeville killings in March 1960.¹⁰⁸ The ANC's shift to armed struggle and its support from the Eastern bloc also alienated some supporters in the West. One analyst states that:

International organizations for which anti-communism was an ideological fundament, such as the International Confederation of Free Trade Union, even actively worked against the ANC, pursuing other alternatives in the context of the transnational anti-apartheid movement.¹⁰⁹

In 1962 at the Pan-African Freedom Movement Conference, African delegates challenged the ANC and the Congress Alliance over its multiracial character. The ANC's multiracialism came out of its early Christian foundations and this tradition, combined with its commitment to non-violence, attracted support internationally from liberals and Christian organisations. The stance on non-violence did not last, however, as conditions in South Africa worsened and the ANC formed its military wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe (Spear of the Nation) in 1961. Nevertheless, its commitment to multiracialism continued. Despite the criticism directed at it by some of the newly independent African states, they promised funds to PAC and the ANC. These included Ethiopia, Liberia, Morocco and Nigeria. Further, the Algerian Liberation Movement (FLN) declared its military training camps would be available to both organisations. For the sake of unity, attempts were

made by the Ghanaian government under Kwame Nkrumah to create a joint resistance front between the ANC and PAC, but recriminations and hostility between both camps soon rendered this impossible.¹¹⁰ The Organisation of African Unity (OAU) also recognised the ANC and PAC as legitimate representatives of the South African people. This was significant in that it led to recognition by the UN General Assembly, its UN Special Committee Against Apartheid and other solidarity movements that recognised the struggle of the people in South Africa.¹¹¹

PAC remained hostile to white involvement in any aspect of black liberation politics. Africanists referred to whites as alien settlers with no part to play in a liberated South Africa. However, the first leader of PAC, Robert Sobukwe, articulated a more subtle formulation of Africanism. He defined African identity in ideological rather than racial terms, saying that anyone could be African if he or she were loyal to Africa. However, Sobukwe clearly held an ambivalent attitude towards whites, as he went on to suggest that white South Africans in general would probably be unable to develop such loyalty.¹¹² Africanists claimed that victory could come only through armed struggle but conceded that organised labour would play an important part in the campaign for liberation. For them, the fight against apartheid was synonymous with the battle against Soviet socialism.

Somewhat unrealistically, PAC had set itself targets of a membership of 100,000 within a year and liberation for South Africa by 1963. It failed to meet both objectives, though the number of adherents it claimed by 1960, over 20,000, was comparable to the likely membership of the ANC at this time.¹¹³ The two liberation movements were in a rivalry to prove their political credentials. Internationally, PAC began to raise its profile during the 1960s and 1970s, and it received recognition from the frontline states and African countries such as Nigeria and Zimbabwe. These territories called for a united front between the ANC and PAC; however, this appeal temporarily undermined the ANC's drive to be recognised as the sole mass-based representative of Africans inside South Africa.¹¹⁴ Once in exile, PAC established its headquarters in Dar es Salaam in 1973.¹¹⁵ Its emphasis on pan-Africanism and anti-Soviet communism aided its attempt to network and receive support in Europe, the United States and China. Criticism of the ANC's close relations with the SACP provided access to, and support from, organisations that held a strong anti-communist bias

such as the American Federation of Labour, or the Congress of Industrial Organisations, a leading group in the International Confederation of Free Trade Union (ICFTU). From the ANC's perspective, suspicions were raised about whether PAC was receiving funding from the CIA, yet so far conclusive evidence has not been uncovered. Furthermore, although the ANC had sent members for military training in China in 1961 and 1964, the Sino–Soviet split seeped into the rivalry between PAC and the ANC when the ANC supported the Soviets in the Russian–Chinese dispute. PAC sent delegates to China after the Chinese offered military training and funding. The Soviets became the main ally to the ANC, and its satellite states in the Eastern bloc provided arms, military training and education to ANC members until the end of the 1980s. Maoist influence now shaped PAC's critique of apartheid and its struggle against the apartheid state. Its anti-Soviet communist stance also attracted Maoist and Trotskyist factions that were emerging during the 1960s and 1970s and who gave their support to PAC.¹¹⁶

In South Africa from the late 1970s, PAC did work on strengthening its internal contacts with the National Forum (NF) and AZAPO.¹¹⁷ However, these links were weak in comparison to the ANC links with the growing mass-based networks of the UDF. During the late 1980s there were reports of PAC guerrillas operating inside South Africa as well as receiving support from the Soviet Union, which would seem to contradict its anti-communist stance.¹¹⁸ In 1985, PAC's presence in South Africa was visibly demonstrated by youths wearing T-shirts with the PAC-initiated slogan 'One Settler One Bullet'. However, it was the ANC that took the lead in attracting and retaining the lion's share of support from the African majority. The ANC was able to build an international reputation for discipline and organisation, despite periodic dissenters who were quickly expelled. PAC gained a reputation for internal factionalism, which left the impression of weakness and disorganisation. Assassinations of PAC members by their own affiliates and mutual expulsions between executive members added to the sense of chaos within the movement.¹¹⁹ However, like the ANC, PAC did manage to maintain good relations with the UN and the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), which helped to familiarise other international forums with the plight of those living under apartheid.

During the 1980s the ANC's legitimacy, besides its internal networks, rested on its ability to build and retain regional and

international support. Financial assistance came from the OAU, Cuba and eventually China, which also backed PAC. The Eastern bloc and Scandinavia provided military equipment, arms, training and diplomatic collaboration. All of these forms of support ensured the ANC's survival and fight against the apartheid regime.¹²⁰ Diplomatically, the ANC was able to attain the position of a respectable multiracial democratic alternative to the white minority government in Pretoria. Although the ANC largely escaped being caught up in the cold war stand-off between East and West, nevertheless its European support from the late 1970s was led by the Scandinavian social democracies. According to one commentator:

Supporting the ANC (and other liberation movements) was part of a strategy in which the Socialist International intended to carve out a political space for itself between the two power blocs.¹²¹

However, other northern European countries such as Britain under Mrs Thatcher, and Germany under Helmut Kohl, were slow in their acknowledgement of the legitimacy of the ANC to speak on behalf of the African majority in South Africa. Furthermore, the impact of the financial backing of the ANC by Scandinavian countries must be taken into account when assessing its ability to sustain its activities in exile. Recent research has demonstrated that from the 1970s, the ANC was the sole recipient of support from the Swedish government, instigated by the Swedish Social Democrats. This amounted to two-thirds of the ANC's civil budget.¹²² It is argued that this support was largely due to the fact that early contacts were made in international forums during the 1950s and 1960s, between ANC members and young Swedish politicians who later assumed prominent political positions in Sweden.¹²³ Despite criticisms of the ANC's links to the SACP and its Eastern bloc support, this did not stop Swedish support of the ANC. Moreover the class differences between the ANC and PAC leadership meant that the 'grass-roots' background of PAC representatives left them at a disadvantage within international networks and among national elites against the more urbane and sophisticated ANC leadership figures.¹²⁴

Ultimately, PAC lost in its domestic and international rivalry with the ANC. PAC's early leadership under the intellectual Robert Sobukwe provided a credible challenge to the ANC, but Sobukwe's removal from

the organisation, his incarceration and brief release until he died shortly after in 1978, plunged the movement into internal disputes and ineffectual leadership.¹²⁵ During the 1980s, PAC underwent a resurgence of activity with its guerrilla attacks inside South Africa. This was due to the leadership of John Pokela who, after his prison release, was elected president of the exiled PAC, which he directed from its headquarters in Dar es Salaam. In two years, with the support of Tanzanian allies, he was able to assert control over the movement's military wing, the Azanian People's Liberation Army (APLA), and reincorporate dissenting factions.¹²⁶ Pokela also built up relations with African allies, which had been badly damaged by the unruly behaviour of previous leaders. In 1985 when he died, PAC, particularly its internal organisation, was in a stronger position to undertake the challenge of opposing the apartheid state.

In 1985, under the leadership of former Robben Islanders, Johnson Mlambo and Zephaniah Mothopeng, the APLA undertook guerrilla operations inside South Africa. These attacks targeted the South African security forces, but PAC's infiltration into South Africa was halted when its operatives entering South Africa through the border with Botswana were caught and arrested in Johannesburg and Mafikeng. In Lesotho during the same year the chief representative and five PAC members were killed by a Lesotho army patrol on the border. PAC had contacts with local opposition groups and, unsurprisingly, the Lesotho government expelled the movement because of its meddling with local politics.¹²⁷

But yet infiltration into South Africa was not to be deterred, and APLA activity in Cape Town attempted to revive PAC networks in the Western Cape, an area of strong PAC support. But the apartheid state had the upper hand and apprehended the individuals attempting to do this, which led to further arrests, trials and convictions. Matters continued to worsen for PAC and in 1986 an attempt to send guerrillas from Libyan training camps through Athens was foiled by a Greek immigration official who did not allow APLA members to board an Air Zimbabwe flight to Harare. In 1987, the movement faced embarrassment when it was alleged that PAC members participated in a Zambian drug-smuggling ring. The arrest and conviction of another member, Andile Gushu, in the same year in the Western Cape, pointed to another discovery of PAC underground work in the region. There were more

clashes between PAC operatives and the South Africa police in the second half of the 1980s.¹²⁸ Despite the catalogue of disasters for the movement in the late 1980s, PAC representatives did meet with senior US State Department officials as well as officials in the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office. In 1988 it received an invitation to send representatives to Russia, and held discussions with the National Council of Trade Unions, which was visiting Dar es Salaam. PAC produced a document, the 'PAC Manifesto', which outlined a socialist democracy in Africa.¹²⁹ During 1989, PAC supporters in South Africa established a new organisation for PAC activities, the Pan Africanist Movement (PAM), which was formally launched in December that year in Bloemfontein. A 16-member executive was elected and veterans from the early years of PAC such as Clarence Makwetu, the new PAM president, and a younger group of trade unionists, were strongly represented. However, from the 1990s PAC struggled to gain a foothold in the emerging political dispensation because the ANC's message of a multiracial political future had gained overwhelming popular support.¹³⁰

Black British reaction to the ANC and PAC

Although the black British response towards the ANC and PAC will be discussed in the following chapters, it is important to make the point at this juncture that once in exile and competing to attract supporters, neither liberation movement could ignore the black community in Britain, a vital constituency of potential support with a unique understanding and affinity for their struggle. The ideological split between the ANC and PAC travelled with their respective representatives as they went into exile and set up external missions in London in the early 1960s. Despite being cold-shouldered by European governments, the ANC experienced a better reception in Europe than PAC among anti-apartheid supporters. This was mainly due to the ANC's superior organisation, particularly in international forums such as the United Nations, and its strong and capable leadership figures, with none of the splits and divisions that weakened PAC. The ANC managed to attract funding and support from a broader spectrum of people in Britain and Europe. Crucially the black majority supporters in South Africa kept its name alive during their protests against the state.

The ANC was therefore able to present a persuasive argument before international observers that it was the sole representative of African aspirations fighting for liberty in South Africa.

In Britain, the black activist response towards the ANC and PAC shifted between coolness towards the former, and a greater level of appreciation towards the latter, which rejected the multiracialism of the ANC and advocated an African-focused nationalism. It shifted back to a realisation that only the ANC, with its multiracial platform, was more fully endorsed by the African majority, and could bring relatively peaceful change to South Africa. However, Suresh Kamath, an active member of the AAM and its Black and Ethnic Minority Committee, expressing what he felt may have been a greater level of sympathy for the strident views of PAC, stated:

There were elements in this country that were racially 'exclusive'. There was recognition that you could have people who were anti-apartheid but did not necessarily support the ANC, more supported the PAC. We worked with them, did not necessarily agree with their wider perspective but we did work with them.¹³¹

A former head of the National Union of Students and a supporter of the AAM (while a student), is more direct:

Black political activists were hostile to the ANC [...] I'm talking about organized community groups, activists within the black community, people in the Black Unity and Freedom Party all these kinds of people were more interested in the black nationalist perspective in South Africa, as a consequence they were rather hostile to the ANC because the ANC was consciously multi-racial, they were also hostile to it because of the involvement of the Communist party and they were suspicious of the Communist party.¹³²

The extent to which the black community may have drawn ideological distinctions between southern African liberation groups is impossible to measure. In the view of the musician and poet Linton Kwesi Johnson, who was a prominent figure of the young black intelligentsia in the late 1970s and 1980s, many black Britons were not attuned to the ideological distinctions between the ANC and PAC:

I don't think ordinary black people in this country really made any distinction about PAC or ANC, politically minded people would be split, the more radical progressives would be pro-ANC and black nationalists would be pro-PAC but in terms of the general population, I don't think people made any distinction between the two. As long as you were struggling and fighting against apartheid and fighting to free black people, people identified with them whoever they were.¹³³

Furthermore, black activists were suspicious of the AAM and it did not help that its hierarchy tended to favour the ANC.¹³⁴ The organisation formally recognised both liberation movements, but in practice, relations with the ANC were warmer and more productive. This bias was inbuilt from the beginning. A significant factor was that the AAM originated in direct response to the ANC's request in 1959 to boycott South African goods. From this point the two organisations worked in tandem mutually supporting each other. The ANC established and maintained an independent presence in London, at its office that functioned as its external mission headquarters. The AAM, on the other hand, often acted as an interpreter of its objectives to the British people and was its main support in Britain and on the international stage. At the same time, critics of the ANC were condemning as terrorism its opposition to a Western-orientated government in South Africa.¹³⁵

The AAM's relations with PAC were distant, as far back as 1965; tensions between the AAM and PAC became public. In a published memorandum during the mid-1960s, PAC criticised the lack of success of the AAM's boycott, its attitude to armed struggle and failure to adequately condemn the British Labour government's export of arms to the South African government. In response, the AAM excoriated PAC for its public critique, which potentially played into the hands of its enemies. Despite a plea for 'a new period of cordiality and co-operation' relations between the two remained discordant.¹³⁶ Also radical movements, such as the BCM emerging in South Africa and bearing resemblance to PAC in its anti-white rhetoric, tended to be shunned by the AAM. In the 1970s, when the BCM began to gain influence among the African youth in South Africa, the AAM refrained from making contacts because its rhetoric was perceived to represent a similar brand of Africanism epitomised by PAC.¹³⁷

In Britain, black activists pointed to the fact that the presence of African representatives at the ANC offices seemed non-existent and that this gave the impression that white South Africans were in charge and directing the struggle. A former executive member of the AAM and founder of its Black and Ethnic Minority Committee explains why this seemed to be the case, at least initially:

There were not a lot of blacks in the ANC leadership here at first. Look at the society they came from. A lot of the white South African members of the ANC were fairly well off people. A lot of the Asians were well off [...] they were able to run away and come here and live comfortably and work in professions. When the ANC allocated tasks they were performed by those living here in this country, they were the people available. Not enough black people were in the office, the real decision makers were white. It is only when people like Mbeki came visiting or Mendi that you saw black people.¹³⁸

However, others have provided an alternative perspective on the seeming absence or invisibility of African ANC members exiled in London. It has been suggested that the mainly white volunteers in the ANC London office did not reflect the depth of African involvement in coordinating and directing ANC operations. Volunteers in the public realm of the office were allocated different roles to those Africans working clandestinely behind the scenes.¹³⁹

As the 1980s progressed, black radicals once hostile to the multiracialism of the ANC began to acknowledge that in comparison to PAC, the ANC was in a stronger position to steer South Africa into a new political dispensation. As one who understood the frustrations that radicals felt over the prominent position of whites in organisations fighting for black rights, a member of the Anti-Racist Alliance at the time describes the transformation of thought that some underwent:

There were lots of debates around PAC and ANC colleagues. But we understood that the motor of history was behind the ANC, regardless of what one's personal political views were. When you're seeking freedom from a ruthless and totalitarian regime, you have to make political alliances on the basis that to build a critical

mass is the most effective way of ridding yourself of the oppression. You don't allow the small ideological differences of interpretation to become a bulwark against you working together to overthrow [injustice].¹⁴⁰

From the mid to late 1980s, the gradual acceptance of the ANC with its emphasis on multiracialism by black activists in Britain coincided with growing recognition and support of Nelson Mandela in the rest of the population. The efforts of anti-apartheid activists provided organisational and funding succour to the ANC and other political opponents in exile. The combined efforts of anti-apartheid groups generated a climate of strong national and international disapproval against apartheid. It was during the 1980s that the 30 years of the AAM's campaigns against the apartheid government came to fruition and it is to these activities that this chapter now turns.

The 1980s: the AAM structure and personnel

In the early 1980s the AAM was based in Mandela Street in Camden, north London.¹⁴¹ A sum of £20,000 had been raised to equip and refurbish this office, which became a target for South Africa agent activity and was consequently burgled and blown up.¹⁴² As the movement and its operations expanded, office space rapidly reduced, and there were three other moves between 1986 and 1988. In the choice of figures for its internal positions, the movement managed to maintain an even balance between individuals born in South Africa with their experience of living under apartheid and those born in Britain with their experience and knowledge of the British political context. Individuals in the position of president, chairman and executive secretary of the movement reflected this mixture of those who had been born in South Africa or were British with links to South Africa. It seems, however, that a similar consideration was not given to incorporate figures prominent in the fight against racism in Britain and abroad.

Since the 1950s, individuals such as David Pitt, Jocelyn Barrow, Richard Hart, John La Rose and Chris Lemet had campaigned against racial and social injustice and worked towards promoting equal opportunities in British public life. They were skilled communicators and contributors to a plethora of causes at home and abroad and opposed

apartheid. Through the various organisations to which they belonged, they appealed to black and white citizens and encouraged a shared sense of empathy for those living under any unjust system. In retrospect, some put the failure to incorporate such individuals down to inexperience of the AAM and its unfamiliarity with individuals who did not fit comfortably into white liberal Britain.¹⁴³

In failing to recognise the potential contribution that figures of the calibre of David Pitt, C.L.R. James, A. Sivanandan and others could have brought to the organisation in its formative and later years, the AAM undoubtedly missed an opportunity to draw on the vast experience of these individuals who, through their participation, could have provided a bridge into sections of the black community and broadened and encouraged greater numbers to join the AAM. Instead, the AAM turned to individuals in mainstream public life to enhance the profile of the movement. Therefore, Robert Hughes, a member of Parliament, held the position of chairman for nearly 20 years from the mid-1970s, while the South African, Abdul Minty held the post of honorary secretary for most of the movement's existence. During the 1980s, Vella Pillay, another South African, acted as treasurer, and the executive secretary was Mike Terry. Terry held this position for 20 years, having taken over from indefatigable predecessors such as Dorothy Robinson, Ethel de Keyser and Basil Manning. From the mid-1980s, Alan Brooks acted in the capacity of deputy executive secretary.¹⁴⁴

The growth in the volume of work that the AAM undertook during the course of its history can be measured by the increased numbers of its full-time employees. After starting with fewer than ten full-time workers in the 1960s, by the mid-1980s, aside from volunteers, the number had increased to 23 employees working at the headquarters.¹⁴⁵ South African émigrés domiciled in Britain were the driving force of the AAM, aided by exiles fleeing the restrictions of the apartheid state. During the 1950s and 1960s, the growth in the number of South African migrants to Britain was gradual but small in comparison to West Indians or Asians from the Indian subcontinent. As the political situation deteriorated in South Africa and became increasing intolerable for dissidents, the numbers of individuals arriving in Britain increased. In 1951 there were 27,500 South Africans living in England and Wales. By 1991, there were 68,000 with the majority living in the south-east of England.¹⁴⁶ As Israel notes:

Levels of emigration from South Africa to the United Kingdom seem to reflect the ongoing struggle between state and opposition in South Africa. As tensions increased after Sharpeville, Soweto and the insurrection of the mid-1980s, so the numbers of people who left for Britain increased. As the tension subsided, so the numbers of emigrants fell away.¹⁴⁷

For those who were political opponents of the apartheid regime, the exile network they found in Britain was strong and supportive. These networks often provided a place to work and pointed the way to accommodation. Many were able to utilise professional, social and political networks to find employment. However, the disadvantages of race in the South African context coupled with the dynamics of racial discrimination in Britain meant that the experiences of white and black South Africans settled in Britain could be as unequal as it was under apartheid.

Membership

The AAM had few subscription members for most of its early years until the mid-1980s. This had an impact on its potential for mass action. From the mid-1980s, numbers began to rise and between 1984 and 1985 there was a net increase of 1,200 individual members, which reached a total of over 4,000; the next year the figure rose to 7,500.¹⁴⁸ The rise in membership reflected the increased campaigning activity of the AAM from the mid-1980s. This related to the intensification of the anti-government struggle in South Africa throughout the decade, as unrest in the townships grew and spread throughout the country and state-of-emergency legislation was passed by the South African government in an attempt to quell the unrest.¹⁴⁹ The AAM introduced a two-tier structure of national and local membership in recognition of the fact that the figures of national membership had never accurately reflected the real support for the movement. There was a total lack of standardisation in local membership rates and therefore any accurate record of membership.¹⁵⁰ The total number of national individual memberships rose from 7,500 in 1985 to 8,400 in 1986, and then doubled to approximately 18,000 between 1987 and 1988. National membership peaked at 19,410 in March 1989.¹⁵¹ By the end of the decade overall membership had slumped to 14,000, which perhaps demonstrates the fickle nature of popular sentiment.¹⁵² Earlier in the

decade, in 1981, the AAM took the decision to concentrate on group membership rather than individual membership. It was difficult to rely on the continuity of individual membership via a renewal system, while the affiliated groups provided a more reliable financial profit for the movement. Between 1988 and 1989, group affiliations peaked with 1,291 associated with the AAM.¹⁵³

Consumer boycotts

During the 1980s, the AAM organised a number of campaigns that kept its profile high in the public consciousness and distilled the issues of apartheid in a way that the public could identify and understand. Mirroring previous consumer boycott campaigns, the call to boycott South African goods was a form of anti-apartheid action. It provided an opportunity for anyone so inclined to personally take part by withholding their consumer patronage and thus contributing to the effort to weaken the economic strength of the state, which was based on business and trade. Although the long-term economic impact of shunning South African goods is difficult to measure and made little discernible dent in Britain's trade with South Africa, it could be argued that the AAM won the public-relations war with its encouragement of consumers to boycott known South African brands. This also applied to shops or companies, banks and businesses that traded with South African partners. This form of consumer protest appealed to many and allowed people to feel they could take an active part in striking against the regime.¹⁵⁴

The AAM's emphasis on boycotting South African goods throughout the 1980s, focusing as it did on British business and economic links, was due to the belief that the apparatus of apartheid depended and thrived on foreign capital of which British business held a disproportionate share. As discussed in Chapter 2, British government policy placed emphasis on commercial considerations to determine its economic relations with South Africa, and it was deemed that increased trade was preferable to ceasing relations with the country. In 1979, just after the national elections that brought Mrs Thatcher to power, Cecil Parkinson, the new Minister of State at the Department of Trade declared emphatically that, 'we cannot allow our trade with South Africa to be reduced'.¹⁵⁵ He also noted the government's intention to 'maintain and develop economic links' with South Africa.¹⁵⁶ The Conservative government encouraged

trade missions between British companies and South African counterparts and refused to curtail these trips. Companies like Shell, ICI and GEC were quick to take advantage; GEC won a contract to supply £250 million worth of turbine generators to South Africa's state Electricity Supply Commission. Other British companies won multi-million-pound contracts to supply turbine generators for a new power station in Johannesburg. British Leyland followed through with a major expansion of its South African car production. Despite protests against the continuing trade missions and visits to South Africa by representatives of the British Chambers of Commerce, the AAM had no effect in changing governmental support.¹⁵⁷ The British government continued to encourage trade with South Africa even when the US Congress passed the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act over the presidential veto in 1986. American imports were reduced by nearly 50 per cent within the next year, and imports and exports in Britain declined, due more to exchange-rate fluctuations. Trade increased once more in the late 1980s with the strong backing of the government's trade and industry department.

Nevertheless, the AAM continued to campaign against trade and economic links with South Africa. It chose to concentrate on Britain's economic links as it never really achieved the membership strength to organise major national consumer boycotts until the late 1980s. The promotion of consumer boycotts remained a key part of the movement's wider strategy to encourage members of the public to withdraw their financial support from businesses trading with various sectors of the apartheid state. Also, the early 1980s saw a number of consumer boycotts in South Africa in support of trade union action. In Britain, the AAM had noted that boycotts were, 'the best and most effective opportunity for educating public opinion [... bringing] pressure of British opinion on the United Kingdom government so that this country ceases to support the South African apartheid regime'.¹⁵⁸ Boycotts were either undertaken individually by people refusing to purchase South African goods or by local anti-apartheid groups or groups with an anti-racist agenda where boycotts were organised against shops or businesses that received or imported to South Africa or had some connection. After passing an AGM resolution in 1979, the AAM launched a consumer boycott in 1980 with information sheets, posters and assorted publicity material and lists of South African products to accompany its designated fortnight of action in

June. Another boycott was organised the following year, along with a petition campaign to win support from the public. In June 1984, to mark the AAM's 25th anniversary, it launched another boycott campaign with an emphasis on the content of South Africa exports, which ranged from foodstuff to textiles. The AAM was able to successfully get South African products labelled and easily identified for consumers to take an informed decision when purchasing their goods. As its membership increased during the latter half of the decade, and after a boycott action conference in 1985 with nearly 300 participants, a national consumer boycott became more sustainable.¹⁵⁹

With an increased membership, it was easier to picket, organise leafleting to households and hold demonstrations across Britain. During the latter half of the 1980s, the greater number of supporters and general public awareness undoubtedly generated a momentum of anti-apartheid sentiment that was built up and sustained across the country. The impact of this was demonstrated when, in late 1985, the Co-operative Retail and Wholesale Societies made public the decision not to purchase South African goods. After the Trade Union Congress (TUC) backed the boycott campaign, supermarkets such as Tesco and Sainsbury assured the trade unions that their members would be exempted from handling South African goods. Picketing the major food stores became popular for local anti-apartheid and anti-racist groups. To aid and coordinate these efforts, especially those of trade unions and local anti-apartheid groups, the AAM started a Consumer Boycott Unit between 1987 and 1988.¹⁶⁰

As late as 1989, one last 'Boycott Apartheid!' campaign was launched with the opportunity for supporters to sign a pledge. However, only 44,189 signatures were collected, which disappointed the AAM leadership.¹⁶¹ A campaign bus travelled around Britain motivating boycott activity and selling £15,000 of anti-apartheid material. The impact of these campaigns is hard to measure, but most of the costs were met by the sponsorship of sympathetic organisations. The endeavour was still expensive and a Boycott Festival planned at Alexandra Palace in London had to be cancelled due to expenditure concerns. The AAM saw the utilisation of the boycott as: 'A linchpin of grassroots orientated activity.'¹⁶² Fieldhouse argues:

'People's sanctions' as the boycott was now more contemporaneously referred to, were a key element of the pressure needed at this decisive

stage of the struggle, complementing AAM's national and international campaign work on sanctions. The Consumer Boycott Unit continued to play a strategic role in formulating and developing campaigns for local groups, and AAM continued to produce a range of new literature to support and stimulate the consumer boycott.¹⁶³

Local authorities throughout Britain, particularly those under the control of elected Labour councillors, were often at the forefront in supporting the activity of local anti-apartheid groups. The victory of a number of Labour councillors in 1981 helped the cause. Local authorities in London such as Lewisham and Hackney started to declare themselves as 'Apartheid-Free Zones'. Economic links with South African business and other interests were severed. Activities were organised to raise the awareness of local communities to highlight the subtle and indirect ways in which they might be unwittingly supporting the apartheid state. By the mid-1980s, 83 authorities were boycotting South African goods.¹⁶⁴

Economic disinvestment campaigns

At the beginning of the 1980s the AAM had come to the realisation that the most effective attack against South Africa would be to campaign for a total, comprehensive and mandatory economic ban against all forms of economic collaboration with the apartheid state. An important step to achieve this internationally was to collaborate with the UN Special Committee Against Apartheid. Alongside the UN committee, the AAM co-hosted an international seminar that examined the role of multinational corporations in sustaining the apartheid state.¹⁶⁵ With about 150 attendees, papers were presented and recommendations were made. Significantly, the use of voluntary codes of conduct such as the Sullivan Principles¹⁶⁶ and the EEC Code¹⁶⁷ during the mid to late 1970s were judged to be inadequate and ineffective in changing apartheid practices and stopping its growth in international subsidiaries or companies operating in South Africa. In 1980 at Shell's AGM, the AAM organised picketers outside to mark an international day of action for an oil embargo. The AAM distributed a document highlighting BP's acquisition of a finance company based in South Africa and which allowed the state to legitimately gain access to Britain's North Sea oil supplies. Further, the AAM exposed BP's plan to sell North Sea interests

to a consortium that included a South African mining company. The attendant negative publicity from this disclosure prompted the British government publicly to state that oil companies with interests in the North Sea should adhere to guidelines on oil exports, which excluded the South African market. The AAM called for the boycotting of Shell and BP; both oil companies, nevertheless, continued to pursue interests in South Africa. However, publicity generated by the AAM meant that every move by these oil companies was now publicly scrutinised.¹⁶⁸

In March 1981, the AAM launched an 'Isolate Apartheid South Africa – Sanctions Now', campaign at a conference with 400 participants from a variety of organisations. A petition calling for sanctions was circulated for signatures, and 40 local groups also took up the challenge and collected more signatures in the following month of April. The AAM persistence was effective enough to cause the Labour Party and the TUC to condemn the government's veto of four resolutions at the UN that called for sanctions against South Africa over its involvement with Namibia. The AAM launched a campaign to boycott South African gold due to the role of gold in sustaining the wealth of the South African economy. In 1982 it publicised and supported the UN's 'International Year of Mobilisation for Sanctions against South Africa'.¹⁶⁹ In line with this, the AAM called upon the British government to implement sanctions as a clear signal to Pretoria. However, repeating the government's argument, Conservative minister Richard Luce, MP responsible for African affairs at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), refused to pledge government support because in his view, 'further moves to isolate South Africa by sanctions or other ostracism would strengthen the opponents of reform and push South Africa deeper into an attitude of resistance to change'.¹⁷⁰

In the same year, the AAM organised a conference 'South Africa – The Time to Choose'; a demonstration followed in London on 14 March, which attracted 15,000 people.¹⁷¹ By the end of the year 70,000 signatures had been collected on a petition calling for sanctions. The AAM's president, Trevor Huddleston, handed the petition to the Prime Minister's London residence in Downing Street. Accompanying the petition was a letter calling on the government to review its stance on sanctions. In November at the UN General Assembly, Huddleston repeated this call. The following year, the AAM conceded in its annual report that the apartheid state remained strong due to its Western allies:

Instead of being a period during which South Africa was increasingly isolated, as a result of the policies of the Reagan and Thatcher Administrations South Africa continues to maintain close economic links with most major western countries.¹⁷²

The tide began to turn in favour of anti-apartheid activists during the mid-1980s as the situation inside South Africa deteriorated. The Scandinavian countries as well as France, Spain, even the United States, Canada and others began to introduce economic restrictions, and the EEC imposed comprehensive restrictions on oil, armaments, military and nuclear collaboration. The UK government stood in isolation in its refusal to abide by the EEC restrictions. The AAM tried to persuade the British government by presenting it with a ten-point programme of action that included reducing diplomatic relations with South Africa, banning new investments, asking banks not to make loans to South Africa, upholding the arms embargo and banning imports of coal and uranium from South Africa. However, Minister of State at the Foreign Office, Malcolm Rifkind, refused to adopt the suggested recommendations.¹⁷³ The AAM also organised a national pro-sanctions demonstration that was held on 16 June 1985. Despite a strong showing of 25,000 people in attendance, the government continued to oppose economic sanctions. Not to be deterred, the AAM stepped up calls for an oil embargo and started liaising with the maritime unions.

P.W. Botha's implementation of a state of emergency during the month of July 1985 spurred the AAM to more intensified action. A meeting was held for 300 activists and, at a press conference, initiatives for action in dealing with South Africa were suggested for the government, the EEC and the Commonwealth. The AAM circulated a sanctions petition in Parliament, which amassed 200,000 signatures. In addition, it organised sanctions marches in British cities, and ensured that the issue of sanctions was raised at the TUC and Labour Party conferences that year. At this juncture, there seemed to be a change in the public mood towards South Africa. In the AAM's annual report it reported:

A discernible shift in British public opinion in favour of the Movement's policies [... also] it appeared to be only a matter of

time before the UN Security Council would adopt mandatory measures [... there was] such a momentum in the campaign for sanctions both in Britain and internationally that even Mrs Thatcher [...] found herself obliged to shift her ground.¹⁷⁴

At the Commonwealth Conference in October that year the honorary secretary of the AAM, Abdul Minty, presented a declaration to the chairman of the conference. With signatures from the representatives of over 200 organisations, which represented about 18 million people in Britain, the declaration called for sanctions. At this conference in the Bahamas, the British Prime Minister was pressured to acquiesce to a minimum level of economic sanctions against South Africa. Britain agreed to cease government funding of trade missions to South Africa and discussed measures to preclude the import of Krugerrands.¹⁷⁵ The Prime Minister managed to put the brakes on further sanctions and bought time by proposing the formation of an Eminent Persons Group to visit South Africa, although this was soon cut short by South Africa's aggression against its regional neighbours.¹⁷⁶ The deteriorating situation in South Africa meant that eventually Mrs Thatcher was forced to agree to the EEC's restrictive measures, which included an end to oil exports to South Africa.

During the 1980s, a priority for both Britain and South Africa was maintaining a healthy fiscal and trade strategy domestically and internationally. Britain's investment in South Africa had been substantial from before the Nationalist Party came to power and introduced apartheid, and by the mid-1960s British investment in South Africa amounted to over £900 million.¹⁷⁷ At the end of the decade, it was £1.5 billion, nearly two-thirds of total foreign investment in South Africa. The AAM targeted British firms with investments or subsidiaries in South Africa. These companies, their subsidiaries and the British government argued that investment in South Africa helped to enable change in workforce practices. Interestingly, Lord Carrington, while not explicitly agreeing that this argument was flawed – and drawing on his personal experience of South Africa and what was then Rhodesia, as well as the contacts and friendships made in the region – argued that white South Africans during the 1970s and most of the 1980s had no intention of changing their racial views and discriminatory practices in the workplace, despite the foreign subsidiaries that operated

in their midst. Comparing his time in the former Rhodesia and his travel in South Africa, he recalled:

When I was director of RTZ and visited a mine in Rhodesia it struck me that there were no black people working there at all except in very menial jobs and I asked the whites why this was so; more than anything it made sense to train blacks at least to create a middle class that had a stake in the economy. 'Good idea,' they said. A year later when I went back absolutely nothing had been done. I put it down to the fact that intellectually they understood the need but emotionally they couldn't reconcile themselves.¹⁷⁸

The AAM, in its attempt to name and shame, compiled dossiers of companies that held investments in South Africa. It used this information in briefings and memoranda sent to government ministers. The information was also used in AAM publications and during campaigns to alert the public to the activities of these companies in South Africa. During the 1970s, the AAM compiled a list of 500 British companies with South African interests and produced over 100 individual files on such companies. The AAM supplied this information to other anti-apartheid organisations and media outlets as the issue of South Africa gained higher profile and the demand for information grew.¹⁷⁹ British companies such as Shell or BP, Marconi, GEC, British Steel, Standard Chartered and Midland Bank, ICI, Tate and Lyle and others were targeted because of their substantial investment and trade in South Africa. Anti-apartheid activists were encouraged to lobby MPs and persuade trade unions to raise these issues when dealing with employers. In the late 1970s a notable victory for the AAM was the success of its pressure on the government to speak out against Barclays' decision to invest 10 million rand in South African defence bonds. The AAM directed its protest to the Prime Minister and organised pickets outside Barclays branches countrywide. Protesters were stationed outside the bank's AGM and informed passers-by of its South African connections. Astonishingly, the government's Foreign Office Minister expressed the government's opposition to this investment. The bank did not publicly renege on its decision; it quietly sold its defence bonds but then reinvested the 10 million in South African government bonds.

The AAM called on churches, trade unions and local authorities to increase the pace of their disinvestments. From the mid-1980s, the AAM president urged British banks not to bale out the failing South African economy by rescheduling their debts. Between 1985 and 1990 the South African economy weakened as inward investment and loans faltered. In 1986 the EEC applied restrictive measures to prohibit further investments, and the Congress in America overturned the President's veto and passed the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act.¹⁸⁰ However, the British government continued to support the South African economy; it was still the largest investor and biggest lender, accounting for 40 per cent of foreign capital into South Africa. Between 1986 and 1987 the AAM's argument for disinvestment appeared to hit its target when 15 British companies sold their subsidiaries and others reduced their involvement in South Africa. In 1988 the AAM produced a booklet, 'The South African Disconnection', which showed that one-fifth of British companies that were in South Africa in the mid-1980s had withdrawn within the last two years.¹⁸¹

Until the eve of Nelson Mandela's release, the AAM criticised the granting of loans to South Africa, such as those by National Westminster Bank. When given the opportunity, the AAM president addressed AGMs such as that of the Union Bank of Switzerland. The Union Bank was one of several active participants in rescheduling South Africa's debts. Demonstrations were held outside Swiss banks in the City of London, and the AAM collaborated with the ANC and the organisation 'End Loans to South Africa' (ELTSA) to co-host a conference attracting representatives, including bankers, from 20 countries.¹⁸² In the final analysis, the lack of direct investment, loans and the failure to reschedule debts compounded the pressure on South Africa's economy. This in turn contributed to rising inflation and stagnation of its potential growth.

Conclusion

The AAM's most significant contribution in the international fight against the apartheid state was its ability to convey the injustices of apartheid to the ordinary people in the street. The public was made aware of the various sources of the apartheid government's economic sustenance, for example the profits that accrued from the food and drinks they bought, and business conducted in their communities and on the

nation's behalf that all contributed to the system in South Africa that discriminated between skin colour. According to Rhodes, the AAM:

Offered people simple, practical and meaningful ways in which to express their disapproval of apartheid – to withdraw their support, to boycott and disinvest. Through these actions of isolation, which were both practical and powerfully symbolic, the AAM [...] reintroduced the concept of sanctions.¹⁸³

This chapter has shown that the ANC and PAC, despite their rivalry, managed to cultivate distinct sources of support to galvanise opposition to the apartheid regime. The ANC ultimately emerged as the main contender positioned to assume political power once the opportunity was provided. The apartheid government could not quash internal dissent or prevent the opprobrium generated by the international anti-apartheid movement, in which the British AAM played a significant role. The AAM also recognised that the broader its support base, the stronger would be its ability to influence the government's approach to South Africa, although success on this front was mixed. Ironically, one of the AAM's challenges proved to be incorporating black British groups who shared the same distaste for apartheid. The next chapter examines the AAM's attempt to encourage support and attract and retain black activists from the wider community who were overwhelmingly in favour of the eradication of apartheid.

CHAPTER 4

THE ANTI-APARTHEID MOVEMENT AND THE FORMATION OF THE BLACK AND ETHNIC MINORITY COMMITTEE DURING THE 1980s

This chapter examines the AAM's relationship with politicised black activists and the wider black community that empathised and identified with the liberation struggles of Africans in southern Africa. The chapter outlines the formation of a subcommittee within the AAM. From the late 1980s, its function was to act as a bridge between the black community and the predominantly white organisation. Black membership of the AAM was visibly lacking in its internal structures and in local anti-apartheid groups, even in regions where there was a significant black community. Some members in the executive committee of the AAM wished to remedy this situation, particularly as there was evidence of strong black support during high-profile campaigns such as the cricket and rugby 'Stop-the-Seventies Tour' during the early 1970s and the anti-Botha marches and demonstrations in 1984. In fact, it was the massive show of support from blacks as well as whites during the anti-Botha demonstrations that encouraged the black members of the AAM in London to work towards formally creating a subcommittee specifically aimed at attracting black members. This subcommittee could be incorporated into the movement alongside other specialist groups that existed in the organisation.¹

In 1987, the black members on the National Executive of the AAM suggested the establishment of a 'working party' to explore the reason for the low levels of involvement from members of the black community and to suggest ways to remedy this weakness. A subcommittee calling itself the Black and Ethnic Minority Committee (BEM) emerged from these deliberations with the approval and support of the executive of the AAM. This chapter will outline the formation and anti-apartheid activity of this committee and its members, whose efforts complemented those of the wider movement to fight for the demise of the apartheid state. The periodic disagreements that emerged between committee members and the executive branch of the AAM will also be examined and the overall contribution to the success of the wider movement assessed.

The rise of anti-apartheid sentiment in black Britain during the 1980s

As discussed in Chapter 1, the formation of the Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAM) in 1959 came out of the Boycott Movement of the late 1950s. This had the strong backing of the Committee of African Organisations (CAO), an amalgam of African and West Indian anti-colonial groups interested in political independence for all colonial territories as well as in championing the cause of African rights in South Africa. Therefore, from the 1960s there was a marked level of consciousness among the postwar community of black Britons of the anti-colonial and anti-racist struggles abroad as well as the worsening situation in South Africa. The growing awareness of southern African affairs was aided by press coverage of the atrocities unfolding in South Africa throughout the 1960s and 1970s. In describing the difficult job of raising the level of awareness among the general population, Robert Hughes argues that:

[Back then] by and large the British press was very insular; they didn't really follow foreign affairs. People used to say to me in the seventies, never mind all that South Africa stuff we need to concentrate more on what's happening at home!²

As noted in Chapter 1, the influence of the CAO in the early years of the AAM waned as members returned to their newly independent countries.

Individuals such as Kwame Nkrumah took up positions in government and public life as their countries gained independence from colonial powers such as Britain and France. At the same time, the small black community in Britain was augmented by a steady stream of migrants who entered Britain from the West Indian islands, Africa and Asia from the early 1960s onwards. During the 1970s the majority of ordinary black citizens concentrated their energies on settling in Britain. The immediate priority for most black families was not to join pressure groups such as the AAM but to try to integrate into British society as unobtrusively as possible. In terms of their detachment from anti-apartheid activism, they were no different from the rest of the population. Despite the high media coverage of anti-apartheid protests in the early 1970s, the majority of the population were slow to engage with the AAM. According to Robert Hughes:

Looking back it took a long time to get off the ground, when I became chairman at the AGM's there were only about fifty to sixty people in 1975. You could join it today and you could come to the AGM straight away. That had to be changed.³

However, it was not long before black communities throughout Britain began to encounter the challenges of racial discrimination in public life, from the legal restrictions for visiting family members to unfair treatment in employment, housing, education and the law.⁴ These experiences caused many to empathise with people of colour elsewhere and to redouble their efforts to fight everyday challenges to their humanity. Although there was an absence of black faces at AAM-sponsored events or in local AAM groups, there were occasions when the presence of black engagement and support was notable, for example during the run-up to the Springbok rugby tour and the cricket tour in the early 1970s.

Cricket was a passion for many people from the West Indies, a 'positive' legacy of colonial rule.⁵ South Africa's extension of apartheid into its sporting activities with divisions between white teams and coloured teams had not gone unnoticed, especially the practice of its cricketing authorities to arrange matches only between its all-white teams and white teams of Australia, New Zealand and England, while avoiding India, Pakistan and West Indies cricket teams. In 1970, in the

cricketing world, South Africa was barred from the International Cricket Council, and several Commonwealth countries – India, Pakistan, Guyana, Trinidad, Jamaica and the Supreme Council for Sport in Africa – threatened to boycott the forthcoming Commonwealth games in Edinburgh if the proposed cricket tour of Britain by the South African cricket team was not cancelled.⁶ Members of the black community in Britain were equally keen to express their dissatisfaction against the white sporting authorities of South Africa. The issue of racial equality and fairness in sport, where the colour of one's skin should not matter only the sporting talent of the individual, was an issue that many identified with and considered an ideal to strive towards. Many were willing to oppose the manifestation of racial discrimination in sporting life. Therefore Jeff Crawford, secretary of the West Indian Standing Conference (WISC), contacted Peter Hain, organiser of the 'Stop-the-Seventies-Tour' to discuss the contribution that black Britons could make to the planned demonstrations against the South African team.⁷ Crawford went on to form the 'West Indian Campaign Against Apartheid in Cricket'. This was an umbrella group that included a range of church and left-wing black groups that helped to make their presence felt alongside other protesters, disturbing the 'business as usual' attitude of the South African teams as they tried to play with the backing of their British sponsors. Significantly, this collaboration gave visibility to the strength of West Indian support in Britain against collaboration with the apartheid practices in sport. The late Ethel de Keyser, veteran campaigner of the AAM during this period, acknowledged that although at this time the AAM did not manage to make a strong connection with the black community, members of the community were very visible during the 'Stop-the-Seventies-Tour' sport boycott in the early 1970s. Furthermore, De Keyser stated that the strong black presence 'tipped the balance at Lords' in favour of the protesters.⁸

Undoubtedly, the involvement of the West Indian Standing Conference (WISC) rallied the black community to provide a strong show of support. A few years later, in June 1976, the Soweto massacre prompted a march of protest from members of the black community in Britain. In October 1976, local black groups led by WISC marched from Notting Hill in west London, an area with a significant number of West Indian residents, to the South Africa Embassy, South Africa House in central London. They marched in protest at the South African

government's brutal response towards African children rebelling against enforced educational disadvantage. But such public displays of support were rare, largely due to the fact that black activists in the community concentrated on campaigning against domestic manifestations of racism.⁹

Police clashes

Groups such as WISC combined local and national campaigns for racial justice with activities that highlighted similar struggles abroad. However, when blacks expressed any form of public protest, the police used strong-arm tactics in order to quell what they saw as a threat to public order. Clashes between the police and black youths at the annual Notting Hill Carnival were a clear example of this. Undoubtedly, black youths used these occasions to vent their anger and protest at the way they felt the police treated them. The style of policing was confrontational and interpreted by the black community as unduly hostile and violent. The Special Patrol Groups (SPGs) seemed to specialise in aggressive policing techniques; roaming the streets of London they stopped, searched and arrested young black men.¹⁰ For example, in 1981, a report was published that detailed cases of confrontation between police and members of the black community. The report detailed six attacks on black people in Brixton by the SPG between 1975 and 1979. According to the report more than 1,000 people were stopped on the streets and 430 arrested; 40 per cent of those arrested were black, more than double the estimated black proportion of the local community.¹¹

The SPG operation in London operated in Peckham, Lewisham, Tooting, Stoke Newington, Kentish Town, Hackney and Notting Hill – all areas with large black populations.¹² In 1975, in the borough of Lewisham alone, over 500 black people were stopped and 400 arrested.¹³ The disproportionate arrest of black residents was a pattern throughout the city and in other areas of black residence around the country. In London, the communities responded with anger. The Notting Hill Carnival, which brought both sides into direct contact, emerged as the flashpoint where the youth physically challenged the police. For the police, this behaviour was a matter of restoring public order. The carnival became politicised. In 1976, 1,600 police were assembled in preparation for the likelihood of disorder. Clashes ensued and hundreds

were injured and hospitalised. During the carnival of 1979, the number of police officers on duty jumped to 10,000; not surprisingly, clashes between the youth and the police did not take long to flare up.¹⁴

Confrontations between black youth and the police reflected the growing tension between the police and sections of the black youth population, who were angry at continual police harassment and frustrated over their decaying inner-city environment and poor job prospects and services, which bore the brunt of the government's cutbacks. Among sections of black youth who came of age from the mid-1970s and early 1980s there was a growing self-awareness and cultural consciousness, which looked for inspiration in struggles elsewhere. Many were attracted to Rastafarianism with its emphasis on Africa, and its redemption from white oppression. In Britain, white policemen were viewed as part of a broader system of white oppression. Recalling this period, the journalist Onyekachi Wambu said:

I wanted to solve a lot of problems. The discourse around Southern Africa was one of those problems. We absorbed that discourse through music; you'd listen to Hugh Mundell and the others. Most of the reggae musicians at that stage were talking about 'Back to Africa' Rastafari millenarianism [...] inside of that they did take on the discourse of decolonisation that Africa should be free. All these resonances were going on and shaped how we saw ourselves in a concrete jungle, Bob Marley and others were singing about Soweto. It was very clear that we were part of a wider kind of rebellion of young African youth, and the word used to describe that was 'African'.¹⁵

Popular black music and South Africa

Wambu's growing consciousness of southern African affairs did not arise from direct contact with the AAM, but through music, and he was not alone. In the wider culture of popular black music, reggae artists were Afrocentric in their world view and conscious of anti-imperial struggles in Africa, so they began to incorporate the themes of black liberation struggles in their work during the 1970s and 1980s.¹⁶ The messages of these songs penetrated deeper into the black community than the attempts of the AAM to attract black community support.¹⁷ For

example, the lyrics to the British reggae band Steel Pulse's 'Biko's Kindred Lament', released in 1976 from the album *Tribute to the Martyrs*, reinforced in song the outrage felt at Biko's untimely death.¹⁸ Similarly, the song 'Gimme Hope Jo'anna', a top ten UK hit for reggae artist Eddy Grant from the album *File Under Rock*, released at the height of the international anti-apartheid protest and banned in South Africa, presented a message of hope that change must and would come.¹⁹

The social and cultural impact of these artists and their music in politicising sections of the black community was significant and, much like calypso in the Caribbean, provided a commentary on the salient matters of the day.²⁰ For instance, the song 'MPLA' by artist Tapper Zukie spoke quite clearly about the wars in southern Africa, and European interference. Most notable were Bob Marley's songs, laden with the theme of black pride and struggle. Marley's music and its message had arguably as profound an impact on black youth in Britain as did Steve Biko and his ideology of black consciousness on the generation of African youth growing up in South Africa during the late 1970s. After the manner of Biko's death, his ideas of African pride and cultural affirmation spread across the black diaspora. Furthermore, recognition of the impact of Marley's music and the cultural bridge it had formed with Africans in their struggle was demonstrated by the invitation he received to perform at Zimbabwe's Independence celebrations, which he did to great acclaim.²¹ The author Benjamin Zephaniah, incorporating themes about Africa and black pride into his writing, stressed the importance of reggae music for him and his peers while growing up in Birmingham during the late 1970s and early 1980s. He remembers the galvanising effect of the annual black-organised 'African Liberation Day' on the black community. He stated that reggae music and its artists became an important purveyor of African history and cultural themes that the wider white community could not address. For Zephaniah this music, with its references to South Africa, had a greater impact on him and his black peers than the activity of the AAM at that time. He says:

My real hero was someone called 'Big-Youth' [...] and 'Burning Spear' came out with the classic 'Do you remember the days of slavery?' [...] these were people in Jamaica saying 'we've got to look towards Africa!' [...] we started to read Marcus Garvey who talked about Africa [...] Africa became very important [...]

I thought an obvious place to start was South Africa [...] I used to go on the mike on the sound system and mention South Africa in my chat [...] 'we are not free until our family is free, we will fight for freedom here, and we will fight for freedom in South Africa!'²²

It appears that it was the home-grown reggae artists with anti-apartheid messages in their music that had a greater impact on black Britons than any ANC cultural groups touring the country with anti-apartheid themes as part of their act.²³ Why this was the case is hard to ascertain; the musical output of South African artists who had become internationally well known such as Hugh Masekela, Miriam Makeba and Lucky Dube were certainly appreciated. However, reggae, soca, calypso and other forms of black British and West Indian musical acts had a firmly established fan base among music lovers in the black community and their commercially produced music would have been easier to access than anti-apartheid musicians and cultural acts. Trips to Britain by ANC cultural groups were usually sponsored by the AAM, which did not have established contacts within the black community to showcase these acts widely. From the late 1970s and during the 1980s, despite the cultural boycott, individual black artists did manage to travel to South Africa to work with African artists or received African artists who visited Britain. Black musicians and artists interviewed for this book cited these contacts as a direct influence on their musical and literary work.²⁴ As well as calling for solidarity, some musicians made comparisons between the struggle of Africans in South Africa and the black community's fight against racism in Britain.²⁵ Moreover, within the black music underground in London and elsewhere around the country with sizable black communities, there was a well-established tradition where deejays functioned as 'vernacular intellectuals'. These individuals were often the interpreters of social and political affairs and expressed critiques of the societies where black communities found their civil rights denied. The politics of race in Britain and South Africa was a constant theme. The broader anti-apartheid movement during the mid 1980s used the anniversary of Nelson Mandela's birthday to raise awareness of the struggle against apartheid. Tapping into the emerging public spectacle concert culture, the Mandela concert in 1983, and the Jerry Dammers and Dali Tambo-organised Mandela tribute concert in 1988, was a breakthrough for the AAM in reaching a national and

global audience. Black as well as white artists were prominent during the performances of these events.

Black British perceptions of the AAM

Between the mid-1970s and mid-1980s, the activities of the AAM still did not attract large numbers of black Britons to their campaigns.

There was a deep reservoir of potential support within the black community that the AAM wanted to attract. The AAM acknowledged in late 1978 that: 'The AAM is still faced with the difficult task of mobilizing in the black community in Britain. Some developments have taken place but there is much more to be done in this area.'²⁶

However, when stirred, the black community could organise itself and provide a show of support and protest over matters that affected the community. This can be clearly demonstrated by the response to two attacks against community members that brought a significant number of people out on the streets. On 3 January 1971, a fire-bomb attack in Lewisham, south London, followed a number of racist attacks. In what became known as the 'Sunderland Road Firebombing', in which three petrol bombs were thrown into a West Indian party in Ladywell, the police were perceived by the community to be tardy in their approach to solving the crime. Therefore 150 black people marched to Ladywell police station on 22 January demanding police action. Then, ten years later, there was a more dramatic response to another devastating fire in January 1981 on New Cross Road in Deptford, not far from Ladywell.²⁷ Describing those times, Lewisham Labour councillor and former Labour Party candidate, Russell Profit notes that:

In Lewisham we always had a concern with racism and the levels of racist activity. There were lots of issues around to do with policing, housing, racial violence and to do with issues of young people being disadvantaged through education, or social services or any of the other experiences that people took for granted.²⁸

At the time, the fire was widely seen as racially motivated due to the series of racial attacks and local tensions in the area that preceded the incident.²⁹ Suspicion of the police within the community was based on past experiences; a history of racial attacks in the area and letter

bombings, the tendency of police officers when questioning victims of racially motivated attacks to be aggressive in their approach, even asking victims about their right to remain in Britain and demanding to see passports. The police protection of fascist groups that mounted provocative marches through areas of black and Asian communities such as Southall in 1979, caused insecurity and resentment in these communities. For example, on 13 August 1977, the National Front, with heavy police protection, had tried to march into the heart of the black community from New Cross to Lewisham in south London, before being forcibly halted in Lewisham High Street by local black people and their white supporters.³⁰

In the aftermath of the New Cross fire, on 2 March 1981, in a march headlined as a 'Black People's Day of Action', 20,000 black people together with white supporters marched for eight hours from New Cross to Hyde Park in central London.³¹ This march symbolised the black community's anger and disillusionment at official indifference to the fate of members of the community. Placards carried that day read 'Thirteen Dead and Nothing Said', 'We Demand Justice' or 'No Police Cover-up',³² and despite predictions by the newspapers, there were no serious disturbances during the march. The march was a moral indictment of the white establishment's failure to empathise with the anxieties and concerns of the black community at that time. It symbolised the alienation felt by many from white Britain. Police insensitivity in handling the aftermath of the tragedy, coupled with the inconclusive nature of the investigation, left many feeling that little attempt had been made by the authorities to get to the bottom of the fire. However, the fire did demonstrate the community's organisational and financial strength. Welfare and self-help networks for the victim's families were established, and individuals acted as mediators between the community, the local authorities and police.³³ The 'New Cross Massacre Action Committee' was set up to support and counsel the bereaved families and provide family support. Community activists dealt with the media and provided legal support. The action committee raised £27,000 within weeks of the fire from black and white residents. The aftermath of the fire demonstrated the ability of the black community to marshal human and financial resources when required.³⁴

For the black community in Lewisham, dealing with the aftermath of the New Cross tragedy became symbolic of the set of challenges that black citizens faced, irrespective of where they lived in Britain. There

were significant community problems to address such as the disproportionate numbers of black homeless people, especially those released from local authority care and the prisons, the growing number of excluded black schoolchildren, and police harassment of black youth. Dealing with these problems created activists who were shaped by these experiences of domestic racism.³⁵ Their ideologies were often a cocktail of Marxist theory and black nationalism encompassing notions of black power and the belief that black people could and should take charge of their own destinies. These groups placed a great emphasis on cultural self-awareness, and focused on African and Caribbean history as well as on the local, national and international politics and economics and their effect on black communities.³⁶ In this atmosphere of a growing black activist culture, the AAM failed to capitalise on black activist energy because it remained largely detached from the local anti-racist struggles that black communities faced throughout Britain. This failure of identification alienated those in the community that might otherwise have engaged more readily with AAM activities if they felt that the movement was prepared to fight racism on its doorstep as well as thousands of miles away in southern Africa. Russell Proffitt argues:

[The AAM] had always set itself as a single issue question [...] and to be able to break out of that would have been beyond its remit [...] I think it was a flaw, I think the important thing would have been to push the boat out, to make the local connections, to speak, to engage more with people across the whole spectrum.³⁷

Black identification with African struggles in South Africa

Despite what was happening in their local areas, individuals and community leaders in the black community often chose to take a stand against what they heard and saw about the apartheid state, and the AAM recognised and acknowledged these contributions. Urban black youth easily identified with the struggles of African youth in South Africa in the 1970s and 1980s.

Lee Jasper recalls:

Obviously the struggles that young black people were going through in the UK in the early 1980s resonated with the struggles

that were going on in the South Africa townships, one began to see pictures of black young people in tremendous struggles with South African police services [...] it resonated with our own experience of policing in largely poor black working-class areas of Liverpool, Manchester, Handsworth, Brixton. It seemed to have a universal metaphor for black experience, and it was one that viscerally affected lots of black people in the country.³⁸

Sections of the black press also drew parallels between how blacks were being treated in Britain and the treatment of Africans in South Africa. In casting doubt on the motive of the British government's immigration policy in upholding the deportation of illegal immigrants, who always seemed to be people of colour, an editorial in *West Indian World*, stated:

Our feeling of security has been shattered [...] before we walked the streets of this country as free citizens, entitled to the protection of the law, like anyone else. It never occurred to any of us that we will be stopped by an official policeman [...] like the blacks of South Africa [and] have to produce the British version of the pass – the passport.³⁹

The AAM's recognition of black anti-apartheid activity

The AAM struggled to gain and maintain a consistent show of support from the black community. At the start of the 1980s the observation was made that the movement needed to 'secure greater support from the black community in Britain [...] for a number of years the AAM has regarded this as an area which needs special attention'.⁴⁰ However, there was no further description of a plan on how the organisation might improve the situation.

Nevertheless, there were encouraging signs in line with the movement's objective to increase black membership; AAM office holders noted that local anti-apartheid groups, particularly in the London boroughs with a higher concentration of black residents, were making a special effort to involve black groups in their campaigns. Acknowledgement was given to independent anti-apartheid initiatives in the black community. From the AAM's monthly report, with a section specifically devoted to 'The Black Community', there was an

account in each issue that outlined the contribution of black activists in raising the profile of the AAM in the community as well as in pursuing independent activities in support of southern African liberation.

The black newspaper *West Indian World* was singled out for praise by the AAM for its features and expanded coverage of southern Africa, including a front-page appeal to its readership to support the AAM's 'Free Mandela' campaign. The campaigning role of the BBC's radio programme *Black Londoners*, was commended in the AAM's annual report, especially its concentration on Mandela and its support of the patriotic front, while publicising AAM demonstrations and other anti-apartheid activities in London that it urged listeners to support.⁴¹ Moreover, for the organisation, the most significant contribution of the community at that time was the commitment of black groups to stop the South African Barbarians rugby tour.⁴² Before the South African rugby team's arrival in 1979, the West Indian Standing Conference and Asian groups pledged their opposition to the tour and called on their members not to attend any matches.⁴³ Former BBC radio presenter Alex Pascal makes clear his deliberate strategy to invite members from most of the southern African liberation movements exiled in Britain onto his programme. It provided them with a platform to discuss their liberation activities. AAM representatives were also invited to explain to predominantly black listeners about the internal and regional affairs of South Africa, as well as publicise forthcoming anti-apartheid demonstrations and campaigns in support of the patriotic front.⁴⁴

Pascal's daily *Black Londoners* radio programme was broadcast throughout the London area and listened to eagerly by most black households. It became an important vehicle for the discussion of domestic and international issues that affected the African and black diaspora. Its lively phone-ins allowed listeners opportunities to express their views on a range of current affairs. The programme spoke to and for those black Londoners whose views were ignored by the mainstream media. Many black musicians and artists were given airtime, as were black community leaders and those seeking political office. Recognition of the programme's influence upon the black community was demonstrated by the number of politicians from the mainstream parties that requested air time on the programme in order to campaign for electoral support. Pascal, in summing up his approach while under restrictions from the BBC to be politically neutral, recalls:

You had to be careful on the radio not to voice anything controversial against the powers that be [...] we allowed those who wanted to make their comments to be free to comment [...] using the arts, particularly the voice of the singers and the messages that came through [...] for instance, Mighty Sparrow's 'Isolate South Africa' was a powerful song, 'Duke', another Calypsonian, 'How many more must die', when Biko went and 'Brother resistance'. Every time I played it the South African Embassy wrote to the BBC to get rid of me!⁴⁵

For Pascal, the abiding legacy of the programme was that it 'educated and informed the black community.'⁴⁶

Moreover despite the absence of significant numbers of black members in the AAM, the black community through media, print, music and cultural coverage directed towards the community were fully informed and engaged in anti-apartheid activity when encouraged to do so. This had a greater impact than the efforts of the AAM up to that point. As the 1980s progressed the AAM noticed that:

Members of the black community in Britain are increasingly involved in the campaigns of the AAM as well as taking their own initiatives in solidarity with the liberation struggles in southern Africa.⁴⁷

Black newspapers such as the *West Indian World* and *Caribbean Times* carried reports of AAM campaigns and encouraged their readers to get involved in boycotting South African goods or companies that traded with South African counterparts. The readers were encouraged to boycott Rowntree-Mackintosh products to coincide with the AAM's week of action.⁴⁸ In 1983, the 'Black British Standing Conference Against Apartheid Sport' was formed by the 'Mohammed Ali Sports Development Association'. Along with other British-based Caribbean organisations such as the West Indian Standing Conference, it spoke vigorously against the private tour of West Indian cricketers to South Africa.⁴⁹ The Black British Standing Conference Against Apartheid Sport contributed to the success of the international conference on sanctions against apartheid sport by ensuring the participation of black sportsmen and women and by organising a programme of activity for

the 'International Year of Mobilisation for Sanctions against South Africa'.⁵⁰ The objective was to include significant numbers of young black sportsmen and women in the sports boycott. An invitation was extended to the AAM to be present at the launch in Brixton, south London, which it duly accepted.

Collaboration between black community groups and the AAM began in earnest from the mid-1980s when activists from the AAM staffed a 'Free Mandela' stall at the Notting Hill Carnival.⁵¹ According to Christabel Gurney, who was an AAM member and the editor of *Anti-Apartheid News*, the AAM was able to make a moderate impact within the black community through its Black and Ethnic Minority Committee (BEM). The committee became involved in providing a float in the procession on both days of the Notting Hill Carnival and contributed to the ANC stalls.⁵² Every year from the mid-1980s volunteers distributed flyers and posters, met at the home of AAM members and were asked to wear T-shirts with slogans that proclaimed 'South Africa Freedom Now!' Later, the AAM set up a carnival committee in the early 1990s to plan how the anti-apartheid message could be conveyed to the crowds. In making links with racism in Britain and South Africa, the BEM produced flyers headlined 'Black Solidarity Smash Apartheid Now!'⁵³

At the carnivals in Notting Hill, signatures were collected and AAM material distributed. Black councillors in London were prominent in campaigns for 'Apartheid-Free Zones' in local boroughs.⁵⁴ Apartheid-Free Zones were declared in boroughs such as Lewisham and Camden, and outside London in the St Paul's area of Bristol, where the black community took the lead in organising a boycott of the local supermarket chain Tesco.⁵⁵ It was noted in the annual AAM report that black newspapers such as *West Indian World* and the *Caribbean Times*, and the *Black Londoners* radio programme, were outstanding in their constant support and publicity given to the AAM and its campaigns, unlike the mainstream press.⁵⁶

The report also singled out for praise the television programme *Black on Black*, which was aimed primarily at the black and ethnic minority viewing public, for its coverage of Southern African affairs and solidarity campaigns in Britain. The visit of the African-American politician and US presidential candidate Jesse Jackson in January 1985 to give a public address in Trafalgar Square attracted hundreds of people, 25–30 per cent of whom were black. The AAM acknowledged that Jackson's speaking

engagements provided 'an important boost to anti-apartheid work among the black community'.⁵⁷ Jackson addressed a well-attended church service in Notting Hill, west London and spoke to 70 black councillors and community leaders. On the agenda were issues of racism at the local, national and international level. The late Ben Bousquet, a member of the AAM Executive Committee at the time, organised this meeting at short notice.⁵⁸ Jackson's itinerary included meetings with a range of organisations in the black community, at which the need to support the AAM and engage in anti-apartheid campaigns was strongly stressed. This visit stimulated anti-apartheid activity in the black community. In line with the call by the AAM to boycott South African goods, boycott campaigns were taken up by black activists and local black organisations in areas with a significant number of black residents. For example, the Black Parents Movement in Haringey, north London, and black community groups in Brixton, galvanised their members to shun shops and products that had traceable connections with South Africa.⁵⁹

The following year, the annual report of the AAM noted that the 'Carols for Liberation' event held in Trafalgar Square on 21 December was a great success that attracted a significant number of black supporters as well as that of the wider white community. Four black newspapers in London, the *Africa Times*, the *Asian Times*, the *Caribbean Times* and *The Voice* had sponsored this event. Black churches such as the Methodist Inner-City Churches Group and the London Community Gospel Choir also lent their support. The highlight was the contribution of a choir from the South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO) and the ANC choir, who led the singing.⁶⁰ However, it was the visit of the State President of South Africa P.W. Botha in 1984, to meet with the British Prime Minister, which caused black groups such as the West Indian Standing Conference to galvanise a considerable number of black protesters into the streets to join AAM-sponsored demonstrations of protest at his visit to the country.⁶¹ In explaining the significant black presence at the anti-Botha demonstrations, one veteran campaigner, originally from the Caribbean, recalls:

We had got race relations legislation and we had strength and confidence [...] so by 1984 people felt strong and they had enough young black kids born in this country who knew no other country

who felt 'this is my home, and I'm going to fight for it!' They could go on the streets, which we could not have done during the 1960s, plus the [1980s] urban disturbances had emboldened people.⁶²

The AAM continued to strengthen its links with black groups such as the Black British Standing Conference Against Apartheid Sport, Caribbean Labour Solidarity, the West Indian Standing Conference and the African Liberation Committee, who encouraged their members to support AAM campaigns. The Black British Standing Conference Against Apartheid Sport in particular was commended for vigorously opposing the private tour of West Indian cricketers to South Africa and contributing to the success of the international conference on sanctions against apartheid sport by ensuring the participation of substantial numbers of black sports people, 'as well as giving a tremendous amount of organizational support'.⁶³ Encouraged by the significant numbers of black protesters at their anti-Botha demonstrations, and heavily influenced by its few black members, the AAM executive decided to capitalise on this show of black anger and protest. The decision was made to strengthen and deepen contact with black organisations both nationally and locally as well as to make a greater effort to increase black membership. Black members of the Executive Committee of the AAM set up a working party charged with exploring the perceived obstacles against black members joining the AAM.⁶⁴ The AAM was now prepared to establish a committee similar to others within its structures whose brief would be to draw in black support; the organisation saw this as a watershed in the movement's development.⁶⁵ At its AGM in January 1987 it noted:

The Black and Ethnic Minority communities constitute a unique resource and potential for this, and should be made a key strategic priority. In light of this assessment, we propose that the work of the AAM in the Black and Ethnic Minority communities should be placed firmly on the agenda of the Movement.⁶⁶

The AAM and the working party

In 1987, a group of black AAM members formed a working party that was convened by the movement's vice-chairperson Dan Thea to look into

the matter of setting up a committee that would attract black support. A Kenyan by birth, Dan Thea was a member of the Hackney Race Relations Unit and dealt with race equality issues in the 1980s. Thea was an ardent supporter of southern African liberation politics and was on familiar terms with members of the ANC. He co-wrote and presented a report to the AAM's National Committee after working on its contents with working party colleagues.⁶⁷ Attempts were made by the working party to secure the regular input of prominent black political figures and eventually incorporate these individuals into the structure of the BEM. However, professional responsibilities restricted the ability of individuals to engage on a regular basis with working party members through regular attendance at meetings.⁶⁸

Despite this, consultations were undertaken with the newly elected black MPs such as Diane Abbott, Paul Boateng and Bernie Grant, and the trade unionist Bill Morris.⁶⁹ Input from the prominent black trade unionist Bill Morris was taken into account, and also present at discussions were exiled representatives from the ANC and SWAPO, as well as local black social-welfare groups. The external wing of southern African liberation movements based in London such as SWAPO and the ANC gave their approval to the establishment of the working party and requested to be kept informed of its progress. They welcomed bilateral consultations although they did not join the structure of the working party.⁷⁰ It is unclear why, but the National Committee of the AAM made the decision that ANC and SWAPO could assist the working party on a consultative basis but not as an integral part of the working party. Perhaps the committee wished to minimise the chances of distraction; the members of these liberation groups seemed to follow the committee's lead in this. However, greater involvement in the activities of the working party from members of these southern African liberation groups might have attracted more black activists who felt that black South African exiles were too influenced by white activists.⁷¹ After eight months of discussion, the working party submitted its report in November 1987 at the AGM. The report set down its remit in the following terms:

Our approach was to acknowledge views as to a large or small extent, representing the ways in which the Movement is looked at

by the country's [black] community that has the greatest affinity with the black people of Namibia and South Africa.⁷²

In the report, there were a number of recommendations; it was stated that the work of the AAM with black and ethnic minorities should be placed firmly on the movement's agenda along with actively recruiting minorities into its membership and structures. The report recommended that the movement should conduct its internal and public affairs in such a manner that its anti-racist character was prominent. In its attempt to allay fears regarding the potential threat to the character of the movement, the report stated that by placing a greater emphasis on its anti-racist character, the movement need not adjust the primacy of its southern African focus. Raising its anti-racist profile would help to reduce the common misconception among black Britons that the movement was more concerned with racism abroad than in Britain. However, suggestions on how this would be achieved were not provided. The report advised that particular care should be taken by the AAM to encourage and support active black participation; more effort should be directed to include black members on all internal committees and to hold official positions in the movement. This would give out strong signals to the black community that their inclusion and contribution was valued by the AAM.⁷³

The main recommendations were that the movement should present a positive attitude towards independent anti-apartheid campaigning by black and ethnic minority organisations and should support those activities and events that were consistent with the AAM's policies. It was suggested that the movement should publish guidelines for local anti-apartheid groups and affiliated organisations to assist them in strengthening their links with the Black and Ethnic Minority Committee. The movement should organise over time a series of major events specifically aimed at the black and ethnic minorities in the main centres of Scotland, Wales and England. It should also call upon its entire membership to adopt a distinct approach in developing relationships with the black and ethnic minority community.

The AGM adopted the report of the working party with its recommendations.⁷⁴ The AAM stated that this:

Signified an important development in the Movement's efforts to step up its work in these areas and to address the concerns that

exist, both about the issues at stake in Southern Africa and about the AAM as an organization.⁷⁵

Furthermore it was noted that the organisation:

Applauded the contribution made by black and ethnic minority groups to the work of the Movement. We acknowledge the successes achieved by anti-apartheid activists working with local black communities especially in St Paul's area of Bristol, Brixton, Edinburgh, Glasgow and recognize that these groups have shown the way in some key areas of our work. [We] resolve to widen our appeal to and encourage work within the black and ethnic minority communities.⁷⁶

It was agreed that the movement would establish a Black and Ethnic Minority Committee (BEM), which would promote AAM campaigns and solidarity work amongst the African-Caribbean and Asian communities. Commenting on the role of black participation in the AAM at that time, a former member recalls:

There were people who were not necessarily members but they would support our demonstrations and support our activities. We would talk to a number of black councillors that would give us support but not necessarily become members, or become involved in the AAM [...] the Black and Ethnic Minority Committee was about extending the work of the AAM across the black and ethnic community to gain support for our activities across a broader section of our society.⁷⁷

Similarly, another former member described the formation of the BEM as a way to, 'bridge that gap, between the AAM and the black community, attracting black people who were active in the black community but said they would not touch the AAM with a barge pole'.⁷⁸ One member, who initially started out in the AAM as Mike Terry's personal assistant and later became an active member of the BEM, recalls that:

It was set up as part of a political corrective measure when it was recognised that there needed to be some kind of answer to the fact

that people were already organising in their local groups and it was noticed there were no black people in them [...] the BEM was a response to that, it was set up by the Executive.⁷⁹

The Black and Ethnic Minority Committee's official launch occurred on 25 May 1989, an evening event held at Soho's Wag Club. It attracted 200 people from a range of organisations.⁸⁰ Bernie Grant MP addressed the crowd, and representatives from SWAPO and the ANC were present, including a militant from the Liberation Front of Mozambique (FRELIMO) who gave a defiant speech.⁸¹ Collections for SWAPO's election appeal amounted to £600, which was started with a pledge from the National Black Caucus of £100.⁸²

The report

After the launch of the BEM, the working party's report was used as a discussion document in local anti-apartheid groups that sought to explore ways of increasing black membership and to understand why there was a failure to attract black support to local anti-apartheid groups, particularly in London. The report acknowledged the negative perceptions of the AAM in the black community. It observed that the movement was perceived as, 'distant from the black community [and] all too often seeking to speak for the liberation movement of South Africa and Namibia'.⁸³ It was noted that antipathy to the AAM was particularly strong among black youth who desired to see the movement employ direct action and a more confrontational style in their campaigns:

[They] have a view that the AAM exclusively identifies with 'only one' of the South African movements, is opposed to other organizations which may seem more militant, and ostracizes any one who may be seen to support such organizations.⁸⁴

These perceptions of the AAM were commonly held by young blacks who were becoming radicalised politically and engaged in their own domestic anti-racist struggles as well as the struggles of black 'brothers' and 'sisters' elsewhere. They viewed the AAM as another white liberal organisation speaking on behalf of blacks rather than allowing black

voices to express their own needs and set the pace for the direction of their struggles. One of the founders of the Black Students' Alliance at Essex University in the 1980s recalls:

There was this kind of tendency on the Left to speak on behalf of people and we certainly were not having that [...] there was that kind of movement towards self definition, speaking for yourself.⁸⁵

The BEM aimed to remedy the perception among members of the black community that the AAM was a 'white only' movement. The late Stuart Hall noted that the failure to integrate significant numbers of blacks into the AAM was a structural and cultural problem that beleaguered most so-called 'liberal' organisations that were ideologically predisposed to support and be sympathetic to the concerns of ethnic minorities.⁸⁶ The failure of these organisations to acknowledge and be inclusive of the differing priorities of black members and their communities often alienated individuals.⁸⁷ Moreover, the AAM's 'single-issue' focus on the removal of the apartheid state left little room to address issues of race in Britain. Its overwhelming support of the ANC made the movement vulnerable to charges from black radicals, and particularly members of the Labour Party 'Black Sections', of lacking impartiality and seeking to set the post-apartheid agenda of South Africa. Undoubtedly, the AAM was sensitive to these accusations. During internal debates that explored the ways in which greater levels of AAM support could be provided to local anti-racist campaigns, white members routinely expressed the desire to avoid getting 'bogged down' in what they saw as the unstable and chaotic nature of black politics in Britain.⁸⁸ The key strategists and those who led the movement also held this view, arguing that the AAM would become 'distracted' by British black politics, which would be counterproductive to the overall objective of the AAM to remain focused on ensuring apartheid's demise.⁸⁹

However, some individual members exercised independent choice and did support local anti-racist campaigns and shared platforms with various black groups such as the Anti-Racist Alliance (ARA) when it was felt this was appropriate.⁹⁰ But there remained in the movement as a whole, a general consensus that there were enough groups catering to domestic black concerns in Britain and that the AAM's chief role should be to focus on highlighting the injustices in southern Africa and to

increase pressure on the British government to be firmer with the government in Pretoria. Stuart Hall provided an insightful perspective on why black Britons were reticent to join so-called liberal organisations like the AAM, which had anti-racist objectives:

Black people felt excluded from political organizations generally and they did not make a distinction because sympathetic liberals and radical white people largely ran them. One of their preoccupations was that these sorts of people in the organizations that they ran did not really make common cause with them, so why should they reciprocate?⁹¹

According to this perspective, it was hardly surprising that black activists chose to bypass the AAM. The working party's advice was that the negative perception of the AAM should not be ignored and the movement should explain and defend its policies to remove the impression that it seemed uninvolved in and unsympathetic to anti-racist struggles in Britain, while working towards ending racial discrimination in southern Africa.⁹² Furthermore, Suresh Kamath, later the BEM's vice-chair, explained that at the time black members argued that people involved in the AAM would not have credibility in the black and Asian community in Britain if they did not visibly involve themselves in the struggles against racism in this country.⁹³ The working party, in its report, called for the movement to be anti-racist in 'theory and practice' at home and abroad.⁹⁴

The members of the working party who eventually formed the BEM put this suggestion into action when they decided that the BEM would take up the task of forging links between the anti-racist element of anti-apartheid activism and the wider anti-racist politics in Britain. It was therefore members of the BEM that sent solidarity messages to two anti-racist demonstrations in Southall to mark the tenth anniversary of the death of teacher Clement Blair Peach who died in April 1979 as a consequence of police brutality during a march organised by the Anti-Nazi League, where members clashed with National Front members.⁹⁵ A policeman from the Metropolitan Police's SPG used excessive force against Peach, a New Zealand-born teacher who belonged to the Socialist Workers Party and who also supported the anti-apartheid struggle. Peach's death was perceived by many in the

black community as murder, and it symbolised the casual aggression of the police against those fighting racism. There was a similar expression of solidarity with Rolan Adams, a black youth who was the victim of a race-hate attack in 1991.⁹⁶

The working party report clearly viewed the AAM's single-issue focus on southern Africa as part of the worldwide anti-racist struggle. The authors did not accept the reservations expressed by some that this perspective would inhibit or reduce the AAM's capacity to work for the elimination of apartheid. Rather, they considered that the movement's moral and material strength would be enhanced by the public and firm acceptance of this approach.⁹⁷ Largely due to the fast pace of events unfolding in South Africa, such as Nelson Mandela's release in 1990, not long after the BEM's launch, opposing views within the movement regarding linking up and collaborating more fully with anti-racist campaigns in Britain were never resolved. However, after the establishment of the BEM, its members shared anti-racist platforms with other black groups and gave support to campaigns within the black community. BEM activists drew parallels between the anti-racist struggles of blacks in Britain and people of colour elsewhere, including southern Africa. To some extent, they had the support of a few figures in the hierarchy of the AAM such as Mike Terry, the executive secretary of the AAM who fully supported the BEM's collaboration with the Anti-Racist Alliance.⁹⁸ Although in agreement that the AAM should not become 'hijacked' and diverted into non-South African issues, Terry shared their sympathies that fighting against apartheid was part of the larger struggle against racism. In 1981, Terry had written to the Prime Minister, Mrs Thatcher, on behalf of the Executive Committee of the Anti-Apartheid Movement:

[To] register our opposition to the Nationality Bill [...] as an organization which campaigns against apartheid and racism in Southern Africa, we do not feel able to remain silent when racist legislation is being introduced on the statute book of our own country.⁹⁹

The Prime Minister's reply cannot be located at present in the AAM's papers but the letter demonstrates that the organisation was prepared to register its protest at discriminatory legislation that would have an

adverse impact on black and Asian citizens in Britain. However, as a movement, the AAM remained firmly rooted in its determination to fight the racism manifested by the apartheid state rather than concentrate on anti-racist battles in Britain.

The impact of the working party's report on the internal culture and operation of the AAM is hard to measure. This is particularly true when trying to assess if the movement was able to modify its image and the perception of the way it did things in line with the recommendations of the report. In reality, internal changes to any organisation and modification of its practices take time. After Nelson Mandela's release, the AAM's energies were directed to meet external demands rather than internal challenges. However, when discussion arose as to the future direction of the movement as South Africa moved towards democratic elections, ensuring equal opportunities within the structure of the organisation and taking a less narrow view on fighting racism at home was agreed upon for future organisational practice.¹⁰⁰ The adoption and distribution of the report meant that all AAM members were made fully aware of the concerns of the black community and their perception of the movement. Through its recommendations the report provided the opportunity to rectify misconceptions and put forward guidelines to address perceived weaknesses.

The adoption of the report and formation of the Black and Ethnic Minority Committee (BEM) signalled a bold move on the part of the AAM Executive, and the movement in general, in its attempt to bridge the gap with a section of the society that felt a natural solidarity with the anti-apartheid struggle. This went against the thinking of some individuals in the organisation who were uncomfortable with the formation of a BEM and who felt that racial distinctions should not be made between members. Suresh Kamath recalls the worry in some quarters that setting up the BEM could be interpreted as a 'separatist' move with hints of apartheid in the AAM's own structure.

Nevertheless, acquiring increased black community support was considered too important for the organisation to ignore, especially as many black activists were themselves already engaged in acts of solidarity and support for the liberation struggles of southern Africa. Moreover, it was acknowledged that a way to bridge the divide between the movement and black activists would be to identify with the anti-racist struggle. Abdul Minty¹⁰¹ admits that this held, 'a paradox [...]

and a dilemma as to whether it was right to remain a single issue movement or campaign more widely against racial discrimination in Britain'.¹⁰² According to the AAM's executive secretary, Mike Terry, there was misunderstanding on both sides and discontent lay not only with the AAM's concentration on South Africa, but its bias towards the ANC and the ANC's non-racialism, which ran counter to the more radical elements of black British activism. He recalled:

To many in the AAM, black domestic politics seemed volatile and could even possibly threaten the *raison d'être* of the AAM if they became too involved in its anti-racist struggles. While the ANC's non-racial policy was out of step with the more radical strands of black activists who were more in sympathy with the exclusivity of PAC, there was a strong feeling that blacks needed to organise for themselves without intervention of well-meaning whites.¹⁰³

Some in the AAM argued that black Britons did not share an affinity with struggles in southern Africa and that the two had nothing in common. The racisms of southern Africa and Britain were too dissimilar. A former executive member sums up the prevailing thinking among the mainly white membership:

The fight against racism in Britain would have extended the AAM way beyond its capacities, and ran the risk of importing into a united movement the fissiparous tendencies that abounded in black activist circles. We felt we had a unique and historic duty to fight with and for the oppressed peoples of Southern Africa – a task that they wanted us to undertake, and which required a single-minded, colossal effort sustained until apartheid was ended.¹⁰⁴

In describing the resistance of the movement to far-left groups that sought to hijack the agenda of the AAM, one historian states:

The problem was that the far-left groups that tried to infiltrate the AAM used anti-racism as part of their strategy for converting the Movement from its single issue focus to becoming part of a revolutionary movement with the inevitable involvement in the

left-wing and anti-establishment politics that implied. The AAM decided to duck this challenge and keep clear of the anti-racist movements of the 1980s.¹⁰⁵

It also did not help that the relationship was strained between some black activists and the Labour Party, traditionally the more sympathetic of the mainstream parties to black community concerns. Labour activists were sympathetic towards anti-apartheid aims, but the controversial struggle over whether to establish 'Black Sections' in the party left bitter feelings between radical black members and the rest of the party.¹⁰⁶ These tensions fed into the critical stance that some black activists took towards the AAM.¹⁰⁷ Mike Terry argued:

It became necessary for the AAM to have a broad church of support. However, this often meant that the allies of the AAM presented an area of conflict with black activists. These allies were often the same individuals in conflict with black activists over domestic racial concerns. For example, members holding prominent positions in the Labour Party were often strong anti-apartheid advocates while fundamentally opposed to the moves of radical black Labour activists to form a Black Section within the Labour Party. Therefore, the power structure of the AAM may have been dominated by individuals that black activists felt were their enemies in the realm of domestic British politics.¹⁰⁸

Despite these tensions, the formation of the BEM brought about a greater level of collaboration between its members and black groups that had hitherto steered clear of the AAM. Furthermore, there may have been a level of calculation in the willingness of groups that formerly eschewed contact with the AAM who were now more open to collaborate with its BEM committee. By the end of the 1980s the AAM had gained grudging respect for its advocacy on behalf of the victims of apartheid. Its key figures held parliamentary positions and therefore had access to the corridors of power in Westminster and other areas of British public life.¹⁰⁹ However, the AAM's close relations with exiled members of the ANC continued to cause disquiet among black radicals who felt that the AAM was a barrier between them and black South Africans living in exile in Britain.¹¹⁰

This resentment was commonly expressed; a veteran black activist from Birmingham informed the author in no uncertain terms that the AAM actively kept black southern African visitors to a strict programme of appointments and activity that left no time to meet with black groups in the city. According to him, this was a deliberate strategy of keeping a distance between southern Africans and the domestic black community. He saw the movement as seeking at the time to control and direct the activities of visiting liberation figures as well as the activities of southern African political exiles in Britain.¹¹¹ When this accusation was put to leading members of the AAM it was dismissed.¹¹² However, considering the expressed reluctance of the AAM to associate too deeply with black political activity in Britain, there may have been an unconscious tendency to steer exiled ANC members away from potentially distracting black activists who were trying to make direct links between domestic anti-racist struggles and the fight for racial equality in South Africa.

Despite any tensions regarding the ANC's non-racialism as opposed to PAC's anti-white rhetoric, which suited younger black radicals, exiled ANC figures did welcome black community support. ANC representatives were present at BEM events and shared platforms with the National Black Caucus, Anti-Racist Alliance and African Caribbean community groups when invited to do so.¹¹³ Recalling this period and the issues that arose, a former ANC member and exile commented:

The black community was a key [area of support] so we always tried to work with members of the black community. The ANC recognised that the community was diverse with Caribbeans and Africans. Nevertheless, we wanted to mobilise these members so they would not be left behind.¹¹⁴

The BEM as an adjunct to the larger body of the AAM potentially had the opportunity to gain access to individuals and resources that were not accessible to black groups that were on the periphery of the political mainstream. According to a former member who started out as very critical of the AAM, but who later joined the organisation and became an active member of its executive and the BEM:

Politically active black people thought the AAM was a dreadful institution [...] the BEM tried to bridge that gap, between the

black people who were active in the black community but said they would not touch the AAM with a barge pole [...] we made contact with them and because we were a separate black committee they would talk to us where they would not talk to the AAM because it was a white organisation [...] however,] the AAM had access to some of the most senior people in South Africa. The AAM could make this happen through their contacts with the High Commission and the ANC. These other people could not and that is what they wanted from us.¹¹⁵

The BEM members supported and collaborated with anyone who shared the desire to eradicate apartheid. BEM members went to conferences and representatives were sent to give speeches in which they drew parallels between the anti-racist struggle in Britain, South Africa and elsewhere. Suresh Kamath, the BEM's vice chair in 1990, indicated that there began to be a change of perspective within the wider organisation:

You could not be against racism in South Africa and not be against racism in this country. It was not a principled position that you could take. I think people recognised that. But there were people who may not have been particularly interested in the anti-racist struggle in this country and some of them through our influence started to become more involved in the anti-racism in this country.¹¹⁶

Another member outlines the overall priority of the AAM, which did not particularly include race relations in Britain:

The AAM strategy was not about doing anything with the black people in the country [UK], it was to get the British government to change its attitude, to put pressure on the government to stop supporting the [South Africa] regime that was the whole focus of the AAM.¹¹⁷

Some members were able to contain their discontent with the refusal of the movement to involve itself more directly in anti-racist black politics in Britain and so continue to function and work in the AAM or through the BEM. Some members on the BEM Committee also held positions in

various anti-racist organisations and saw no contradiction in functioning in both. A leading member of the BEM, commented:

One could not address racism in South Africa without addressing it in Britain. The bottom line being, their kith and kin in Europe supported the European races in South Africa. Therefore, one could not attack racism there without attacking the source here [...] the attitude seemed to be that if one wanted an anti-racist organisation one should go elsewhere. For them, AAM had nothing to do with anti-racism, in discussion of these issues the movement was not as democratic as it could have been in considering views.¹¹⁸

Activism of the Black and Ethnic Minority Committee

After the BEM committee was established in 1987 its meetings were held in rented public venues across London. The attendance of active members to committee meetings tended not to exceed 20 people and total membership amounted to no more than 40 individuals.¹¹⁹ Committee members came from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds. Some were unemployed but others included teachers, nurses, a lawyer, local government officials and trade unionists. The first action of the committee was to prepare a document called 'A Call to Action!' which outlined the perspective of the liberation struggle in South Africa and Namibia and the role of the AAM. It stressed the need for solidarity action in the black and ethnic minority community. In 1988, nearly 20,000 copies were distributed at the Notting Hill Carnival, and they were so well received that the National Committee decided: 'In view of the importance of the Movement working in this area the brochure should be made available free to local groups, despite the high costs of production.'¹²⁰

The BEM committee also engaged in discussions with the hierarchy of the AAM concerning ways of involving black and ethnic minority organisations during the Nelson Mandela birthday tribute.¹²¹ Bernie Grant MP, the chair of the committee, vice-chair Dan Thea, and Suresh Kamath signed and distributed an appeal to the black community and the general public to support the event. Black community support for the activity was as strong as it was for the 'Mandela's Marchers'. African-Caribbean societies in the cities of Leeds, Walsall, Birmingham,

Coventry and Nottingham ensured a good turnout of people to support these events.¹²² The AAM's vice-chair, Dan Thea, also appealed to the black community to continue to boycott South African goods and get involved in anti-apartheid campaigns. In August 1989 the AAM, which usually leafleted at the Notting Hill Carnival, took a further step. Led by the BEM in collaboration with the London Anti-Apartheid Committee, the Women's Committee and Church Action on Namibia, plans were made to design and staff a float at the carnival. This was a more direct approach to publicising the issue of southern African liberation to thousands of carnival revellers gathered over the weekend. The float was designed to promote support for SWAPO in light of Namibia's recent independence.

A year later in 1990, the BEM held a 'Black Solidarity' seminar on 3 March in Brixton.¹²³ The seminar presented the latest information and analysed the progress of the liberation struggles in southern Africa. Forum groups were formed and participants were encouraged to put forward suggestions to aid future solidarity work in southern Africa. A further purpose of the seminar was to attract and include black activists who would normally not seek contact with the AAM. The seminar signified the BEM's commitment to mobilise members of the black community in the overall drive to raise solidarity support of the British people. The same year, black activists and BEM members engaged in anti-apartheid work met to consider the theme 'South Africa, Countdown to Freedom?' Bernie Grant, the keynote speaker, gave a description of his recent trip to South Africa, where he had met Nelson Mandela on the day of his release. Grant was the first and only British parliamentarian to meet Mandela on that day, but this went largely unreported in the mainstream press.¹²⁴ Bernie Grant stated that anti-apartheid campaigning had to be linked and related to the anti-racism struggle in Britain. He declared that the entire black community in Britain, including all black members of Parliament, needed to defend the ANC and support the call for sanctions to remain until regime change occurred in South Africa. Black organisations should be totally focused on raising funds and other material support for the ANC. He stated that the Prime Minister should be pressured to provide additional funds for scholarships for South African students to be trained in Britain in order to provide the new South Africa with the necessary skilled personnel.¹²⁵

During the same event ANC member Sipho-Pityana, as the coordinator of the Nelson Mandela Reception Committee, provided a provocative assessment of the emerging new phase in the liberation struggles. Also present were representatives from the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and the ANC women's section. Members of black organisations in Britain were also represented.¹²⁶ A full report of the day's events was circulated to all participants and distributed to local anti-apartheid groups who were encouraged to read and discuss the report and to invite speakers from the BEM Committee. There was a call for high-level mobilisation of the black community for the National Demonstration against Apartheid on 25 March.¹²⁷ The BEM declared that it would:

Continue to direct activities towards the black community [...] whatever the failings of the AAM, black communities, and especially the activists must join the movement and the general anti-apartheid solidarity struggle in Britain. There must be no excuses for not being actively involved in anti-apartheid work.¹²⁸

Out of these events emerged a plan of action entitled 'The Way Forward', which aimed to more deeply involve the black community in AAM activities, mobilise black and ethnic communities for the support of the ANC, and facilitate direct links with representatives of the liberation movement.¹²⁹ Plans for similar seminars in black communities around the country were also discussed. The BEM was allocated the task of formulating a network of black activists and groups, to organise events to attract the support of groups in the black and ethnic communities, as well as challenging media misrepresentations of the struggle in South Africa, Nelson Mandela and the ANC. Raising funds for the ANC and providing material support was another priority for the BEM.¹³⁰

Not long after Nelson Mandela's release, BEM members together with selected black community leaders attended a meeting with Mandela while on his second visit to London. In his capacity as deputy president of the ANC, he urged them to play a full part in strengthening the AAM at what he considered a critical moment of their struggle. After acknowledging black anti-racist struggles in Britain and the support shown for Africans in South Africa he stated:

It is our wish, that at this critical moment in our struggle, the British Anti-Apartheid Movement should be strengthened. We call on you, dear sisters and brothers, to play your full part in this noble movement.¹³¹

Members of the BEM redoubled their efforts in light of the direct request from Mandela. BEM Committee discussions covered a variety of topics including struggles around the world. For example, the politics of South East Asia and Latin America were discussed in conjunction with the progress of the black diaspora in various parts of the world.¹³² However, South Africa remained the major focus and proposals were put forward regarding the twinning of towns between South Africa and Britain to engender feelings of solidarity and support between communities.¹³³ The chair of these discussions was a BEM member known as 'Bankie', a keen observer and supporter of liberation movements, who later became an assistant to the vice-chancellor of the University of Namibia. The violence in South Africa engendered debate, particularly the increasing violence in KwaZulu-Natal between Inkatha and ANC supporters.¹³⁴ There were discussions on issues of racism and discrimination in parts of Francophone Africa, Kenya and Zimbabwe while drawing parallels to the South African experience. Ideas on these topics were discussed as possible subject matter for contributors to the AAM's weekly publication, *Anti-Apartheid News*. Closer to home, the issues surrounding the content of the subject of history in the school curriculum were discussed. Of concern was the often negative representation of peoples of colour and their histories vis-à-vis European civilisation and cultures. It was decided to turn this into an article for *Anti-Apartheid News*.¹³⁵

The BEM committee tried to raise the profile of its work through contributing articles to *Anti-Apartheid News*. In considering its audience, the BEM sought to appeal primarily to the politically conscious in the black community as well as 'progressive' white readers. Under the heading of 'Black Solidarity' members of the BEM wrote on the issues of race in Britain and South Africa. Writers drew parallels and provided analyses on the democratic future of South Africa. In one piece, BEM member Glenroy Watson described his visit to Namibia; the aim was to provide readers with an account of how the region was beginning to open and be accessible to all tourists without discrimination.¹³⁶ With a

page dedicated to the work of the BEM, readers were informed of the activities of the BEM and anti-apartheid events in the wider black community. Committee members wrote articles that discussed the nature of racism in democratic societies such as the United Kingdom and the United States. They warned readers that the transition to democracy in South Africa would not eradicate racial inequality.¹³⁷

Through these articles, the reader is presented with arguments that warn of the reality check needed in the light of the challenges that would face South Africa, despite the euphoria surrounding Mandela's release and the high expectations of multiracial democracy. By highlighting the continuing struggles of black communities in Britain and elsewhere, the authors reflected the consensus reached in internal BEM discussions that there remained a huge gap in terms of equality and representation of black Britons, despite living in a democracy. Mindful of the black experience in Britain, the BEM noted that the challenges of poverty, employment and other concerns that faced black South Africans would take time to be rectified long after the elections were over. These editorials came to an abrupt end, victim of the internal politics between members of the BEM and the *Anti-Apartheid News* editorial board. At this point, the AAM was itself discussing its future plans in light of Mandela's release and the imminence of parliamentary democracy in South Africa. After Mandela's release, members of the BEM continued to champion the importance of supporting the AAM when they discussed the future direction of the organisation:

On the future of AAM the point was made that AAM represented the largest grouping of concerned individuals in the UK on an African issue and in view of declining attention for things African this focus should be maintained. There was consensus that racism or race preference would continue in South Africa.¹³⁸

The following year it was noted:

The BEM committee [...] feel that it is vital that any discussion around the future of the AAM take into account the need there will be to support and work with international struggle against racism. It is also increasingly imperative that the AAM supports and collaborates with anti-racist struggles in this country in the

face of growing trends of racism and fascism in the UK and the whole of Europe.¹³⁹

As negotiations towards a representative democratic state in South Africa continued with the formation in 1991 of the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA), the BEM continued to organise events that raised the consciousness of the black community on southern African issues.¹⁴⁰ An example of this was the organisation of a conference billed as 'Education for Liberation', held at Camden Town Hall in north London.¹⁴¹ Its speakers were professionals and intellectuals from the black community as well as representatives from the ANC and the frontline states in the region. It aimed to examine the ways in which the UK black community could help towards the transformation of education in southern Africa.¹⁴²

In noting that apartheid had robbed generations of black people in South Africa of educational opportunities, whether through poor-quality education or no education due to political instability, the organisers decided that the workshop would examine the strategies and remedies used by black communities in the United Kingdom to counter the mis-education of black children, and examine ways in which these could be applied to the situation in southern Africa. It was suggested that solutions could revolve around adult education, such as technical colleges, vocational courses and distance learning. An emphasis on voter education, youth work and mutual positive action programmes could provide a useful framework for direct links between black communities in the United Kingdom and South Africa in terms of mutual benefit.¹⁴³

Speakers pointed out that there was little provision in southern Africa for black students with special educational needs. Therefore, workshops focused on provisions that would be relevant for the southern African context: materials and equipment. They identified British as well as other international organisations that might wish to assist adults and children. The radical thinking behind the conference could be seen through the conceptualisation of a 'Curriculum for Liberation'. It was noted that:

Black people all over the world have been oppressed by the contents and language of curriculums as well as the political and economic structures of education systems [...] the aim of this

workshop is to identify the key issues in designing curriculum and teaching materials that reflect the rich cultural heritage of black people. It will examine education under neo-colonialism and ways in which such education legacies can be challenged or reversed.¹⁴⁴

The committee in conjunction with other groups such as the National Black Caucus sought to increase the exposure of southern African visitors into black communities, an example of which was a speaking tour organised by the committee that started on 19 June 1992.¹⁴⁵ Two ANC speakers were invited: Lawrence Bayana from the Soweto Youth Association and Kgopotso Sindelo from the ANC Woman's League, supported by Southall Black Sisters. The tour was part of a national black-led initiative involving a number of organisations. Similarly in 1992, the National Union of Students held a black students' conference in Manchester. A BEM member was invited to speak about the committee's work and anti-apartheid activities in light of Mandela's release.¹⁴⁶ The BEM continued to cultivate links between the British black community and African communities in South Africa. The well-publicised visit of Nelson Mandela to Stephen Lawrence's parents highlighted the horror of racial attacks and the devastation it brought to families.¹⁴⁷ This was organised through the collaboration of the BEM, ARA and the National Black Caucus, as well as Mandela's handlers in Britain. A letter written by Lee Jasper at the time to the BEM notes that:

We appreciate Comrade Mandela's busy schedule, and hope that he can find time to visit the Lawrence family. This continuing tragedy is affecting the British black community dramatically and we seek to draw parallels between the experiences of black youth in South Africa and Britain.¹⁴⁸

For one BEM member this visit was important, as it was:

Part of the issue of making the people in the world and Britain understand the interconnectedness to oppression elsewhere [...] it would be difficult to do that without acknowledging what people suffer over here, they have their own struggles here.¹⁴⁹

In 1992 the decision was made to change BEM's name to the Black Solidarity Committee of the AAM (BSC). Initially the name of the BEM committee was used to be inclusive of those who might not have felt comfortable with the term 'black'; however the BEM did not attract the number of other ethnic minorities intended by using 'Ethnic Minority' in its title. Black and Asian members of the BEM now wished to use 'Black' in the new title as it was felt that the name of the committee should reflect the confidence and consciousness of its membership who wished to identify with global African and black diaspora struggles.¹⁵⁰

Tensions

During the early 1990s the BEM relationship with the AAM was temporarily strained over the role of a white member within the committee. The Alan Brooks episode highlighted the remaining sensitivity among some members to white members who operated as key figures on the BEM Committee. Although Brooks's anti-apartheid credentials were impeccable it did not protect him from criticism by black members. He explains his role up to that point:

The Executive decided that I should service the Working Party, and later the [BEM] Committee. I convened meetings, prepared minutes and agendas, and did whatever correspondence or organizing work the Committee required. Bernie Grant MP chaired the Committee.¹⁵¹

However, black members of the Southwark Anti-Apartheid Movement wrote a letter of objection to Mike Terry, the secretary of the AAM. They queried Brooks's presence at BEM meetings and called into question the nature of his role, given the ethnic minority members who were capable of taking on his duties now that the committee was firmly established within black activist circles. In strident terms the letter stated that:

There are a number of black executive members who attend BEM meetings. We do not understand why Alan Brooks needs to be present. If it is to keep the office informed or to provide office service surely this could be done in some other way so that a white man would not have to be there.¹⁵²

The BEM committee was apparently not forewarned by members in Southwark of their intention to send the letter to Terry. While acknowledging Brooks's early contribution, the committee noted that:

With the increase in membership more black members are questioning whether it is appropriate for Alan (as a white person) to play a role on the Committee [...] the AA Executive must recognize the importance of black leadership within the movement if they are to encourage any real form of minority participation and that this must start with the BEM Committee. We would therefore like to request the AA Executive to cease Alan's involvement with the BEM committee.¹⁵³

Perhaps to allay concerns that there might be a growing 'separatist' element within BEM membership, the letter writer was quick to express the BEM's desire to maintain links with the AAM executive, stating that it did not desire to work independently of the executive committee. But it is clear that it desired greater autonomy within the confines of its remit:

We feel our links with the Anti-Apartheid Executive should be via the black executive members, who are already on the BEM Committee. If in the future there are no black members on the AAM executive we will reconsider the subject.¹⁵⁴

Alan Brooks was left in no doubt as to his position, which some now considered untenable in the light of the fact that three prominent black members of BEM were on the executive committee of the AAM and were fully aware of overall AAM policy. Brooks was informed that, 'it [is] important that BEM is solely organized by black and ethnic members and we ask that you no longer attend BEM Committee meetings'.¹⁵⁵

Among the AAM papers there is no record of Alan Brooks's reply or thoughts on the matter at that time. The matter was resolved when BEM members were incorporated into the executive committee and the task of minute taking was rotated among various BEM members present at the meetings. These members of the committee continued to act as a bridge between the two committees.¹⁵⁶

In explaining the Brooks affair, a member of the BEM commented:

It was voiced that blacks should be allowed to run their own meetings and not necessarily have whites sitting in on their forum of discussion. With the white presence on the BSC this took away something from black contribution and the development of ideas and perspectives.¹⁵⁷

Another member explains the objection to Brooks's presence at BEM meetings:

Black members felt that there were issues that they felt more comfortable discussing among ourselves [...] whether it was right or wrong I think in the BEM some felt that Alan was put there to make sure we did not get out of line.¹⁵⁸

Another battle of wills arose between the BEM and the editorial board of the movement's *Anti-Apartheid News*, which was distributed on a weekly basis. The *Anti-Apartheid News* informed its readership about the movement's campaigns and developments in southern Africa. The BEM Committee wished to make regular contributions to every issue of *Anti-Apartheid News*. However, the editorial board led by Alan Brooks wrote to the committee that:

The pressures on space might make that impracticable to achieve and that the impact of the feature might be diminished if repeated every time [...] if the committee has articles of interest to publish in between these specific issues, the Board would be happy to receive them and will endeavor to publish [...] space permitting.¹⁵⁹

The editorial board did not change its mind. The committee dismissed arguments about space and felt that up-to-date black anti-apartheid activity should be detailed and regarded as an important part of the AAM's strategy to encourage black participation in the AAM. In their view, articles written by BEM members would serve to inform the wider body of AAM membership and its readers. Members of the BEM did go on to submit articles but infrequently.

This episode highlights the differences in perspective that existed between black and white members of the AAM. Whether it was a case of space in the newspaper, or of the editorial board not having faith in the committee's ability to deliver regularly, or its desire to assert control and minimise any hint of radicalism, is difficult to clarify, even when discussing the matter with former members. Opinions remain polarised and interviewees continue to hold to the views they expressed at the time.¹⁶⁰ However, BEM activists found a more sympathetic editorial reception from sections of the black press. From September 1990, contributors regularly submitted articles to *The Voice*, *Caribbean Times* and *Asian Times* as an alternative to the *Anti-Apartheid News* in getting their news, ideas and information out to readers. Arguably, these papers had a greater black readership than *Anti-Apartheid News*, though with this limited audience of mostly black readers the BEM editorials did not reach a broader white readership. But the black community could be well informed by BEM members who came into contact with South African exiles.

Conclusion

In 1990, after the release of Nelson Mandela, the internal pace of political change in South Africa overtook the activity and function of the BEM. Nevertheless, the BEM continued to play its part through conferences, sponsored activities and publications in keeping the internal affairs of South Africa in the foreground of public discussion. During the same year, in the report to the AGM, it was noted that nowhere else had the release of Nelson Mandela and other achievements of the liberation struggle been more warmly welcomed than in the black community and ethnic minority groups in Britain.¹⁶¹

As the AAM considered its future, BEM members, drawing on their experiences of political activism, ensured that recommendations from the BEM Committee were included in the movement's resolutions on how to secure equal opportunity in any future organisation. On 7 May 1994, members of the BEM Committee participated and contributed to a special meeting of the AAM National Committee, where a consultative paper was approved on the movement's future. This was circulated for comments and adopted into a final report on 25 June. The paper proposed that the AAM be transformed into a new solidarity movement

focusing on the region of southern Africa. A proposal was made that affiliated groups of the AAM should be transferred to the new body. Its structures and decision-making process would have an explicitly anti-racist strategy. This would be reflected in its activities and the mobilisation of members and supporters against the increasing threat of racism in Britain and Europe. The new body aimed to work with similar organisations abroad.¹⁶²

As demonstrated, from the time the working party first met in 1987, the BEM was not officially launched until 1989. This was largely due to the lengthy period of consulting a broad range of individuals and groups before putting together the report that outlined the challenges facing the AAM in reaching out to the black community. Consultations with potential allies and the external responsibilities of its working party members also delayed swifter consolidation of the committee. By February 1990, Nelson Mandela was released and the AAM, despite its attempts to keep the sanctions issue high on the public agenda, was effectively beginning to wind down its activities. The executive began to reassess the movement's role as the post-apartheid era became a reality.

The BEM's lifespan was indeed brief. It was effectively truncated by the events in South Africa before it had the chance to realise its potential. However, its efforts to reach black communities and galvanise support for anti-apartheid activism made a significant contribution in reinforcing the anti-apartheid message of the wider AAM, albeit through individuals with whom the black community felt an affinity. The support given to the BEM by the executive of the AAM demonstrates the seriousness of its attempt to reach out in a more formal way to black communities, and thereby to connect with black activists already campaigning in solidarity with the southern African liberation movements. Even though the BEM committee at times experienced strained relations with the executive of the organisation, fundamentally the determination of its members never wavered from the objectives of the wider AAM, which was to see the eradication of the apartheid state and the emergence of a full parliamentary democracy for all the peoples of South Africa. Undoubtedly, prior to the BEM's formation, the executive of the AAM displayed a short sightedness in not incorporating veteran and experienced campaigning members of the black community. However, these individuals also missed an opportunity too in their reticence to approach the movement and become more engaged in its

activities. As noted above, domestic racial struggles were seemingly all consuming and many individuals gave priority to these anti-racist challenges. Nevertheless, in the words of one committee member of the AAM, 'activists [were] fighting racism in diverse ways [...] when we came in the late 1980s to focus on the campaign to free Nelson Mandela support from black activists came pouring in'.¹⁶³ Writing to the ANC and Nelson Mandela on his release, African-Caribbeans and Asians in Leicester stated:

[We] the Afro-Caribbean and Asian Communities [...] witnessed one of the greatest moments in the history of Africa – your release from twenty-seven years of imprisonment [...] accept our heartiest congrats [...] we have confidence that your great sacrifice will soon be rewarded and we shall see a South Africa where every one is equal, regardless of his colour.¹⁶⁴

There were black activist groups that maintained a position of support for the southern African liberation struggle, independent of formal links with the AAM. What marked their independence was their reliance on black leadership and their distinct ideological approach to the challenge of fighting against racism domestically and internationally. Some did support the overall objectives of AAM activism as part of their wider organisational remit and held no strong views about sharing a public platform with the AAM if the opportunity arose. However, there were other groups that chose to eschew alliances with white progressives, altogether due to an ideological perspective that critiqued white attempts to empathise with, and work in, solidarity with black allies towards political liberation. The following chapters will examine the activities of these groups.

CHAPTER 5

PARTNERS IN PROTEST, BLACK SOLIDARITY WITH THE ANTI-APARTHEID STRUGGLE, 1970s–80s

This chapter explores the activism of moderate black community groups that engaged in anti-apartheid activity independently of the AAM. The moderation sprang from the fact that, although these groups were determined to pursue their own agenda to fight against racism in British society, they believed blacks and whites could work together to achieve racial equality. One group, the West Indian Standing Conference (WISC), was formed in the late 1950s during the early years of postwar African-Caribbean migration when tensions were high between black residents and hostile white neighbours. WISC was established precisely to bring black and white communities together; it sought to harmonise relations between communities, and challenge negative racial stereotypes. Eventually, this brief broadened into working towards ensuring equal treatment under the law for black citizens. The organisation was inspired by the tactics and struggles of black communities around the world and consistently gave prominence in its campaigns to the fight for racial justice abroad. Opposition to the codified and racially structured inequalities of apartheid became a feature of WISC campaigning activity from the mid-1970s to the end of the 1980s. The fight against racism was considered to be a task for all decent peoples irrespective of colour. Moreover, the organisation had no objections about building alliances

with similar organisations that shared a fundamentally humanitarian perspective, including the AAM.

Similarly the Black Parents Movement (BPM), formed during the mid-1970s to address the inadequacies that had arisen in the education of black children, broadened its initial objective to focus on racial injustices elsewhere. The founders of the first BPM branch in north London emerged from an intellectual circle of Caribbean-born individuals with a deep experience of anti-colonial and anti-imperial activism. The issue of apartheid could not be ignored, and support of the anti-apartheid struggle compelled members to inform and mobilise their local communities to demand a change of government. Members of this circle pioneered the annual 'International Book Fair of Radical Black and Third World Books'.¹ The book fair brought together a number of black publishers, intellectuals and educationalists and ran from 1982 to 1995. The regular South African participation ensured that those who attended were informed about the South African situation and were given scope to express solidarity with the struggle against apartheid. The BPM, though black-led and drawing strength from black community support, was not averse to sharing the anti-apartheid platform with the AAM and providing support to its campaigns. The Afro-Caribbean Self-Help Group, established in cities with substantial black communities, organised an annual African Liberation Day (ALD) with other groups. This provided an opportunity for black activists to inform local communities through a programme of activities including speeches, discussion panels, marches, and performances by musicians about local, national and international anti-racist struggles. The activities of ALD were held during the May bank-holiday weekend and focused on local, national and international issues that affected black communities. As the racial turmoil of South Africa intensified during the 1980s, the organisers of ALD used the day to inform black communities about the injustices of apartheid and to encourage support for the liberation movement.

This chapter examines the genesis of each of these groups and their engagement in alerting their constituencies to the situation unfolding in South Africa. It will demonstrate their ability, with overlapping concerns, to highlight the parallels between the struggle for racial equality in both Britain and South Africa. The groups engendered identification with the African plight in South Africa and cultivated

black protest and action towards expressing solidarity with the liberation movement. The effectiveness of these groups came from their 'interior' position within the black community, in contrast to the AAM's 'exterior' mode of operation that was predominantly white-led and structured, despite the belated attempted through the BEM to tap into black support. Primarily, the AAM sought to influence the government and politicians. The socio-economic and anti-racist domestic struggles of the black communities in Britain was not part of its remit, although it needed support from a broad base of the population, which included black communities. Furthermore, black activist groups had an authenticity of representation and familiarity with black communities that the largely white-led AAM struggled to replicate and exploit in any meaningful manner in its attempt to attract black support.² Throughout the 1980s, until the BEM was formed, the AAM annually reported on the independent anti-apartheid action taken by black communities across the country.³ This demonstrated the consistency of black British support of the South African liberation struggle during the decade.

In evaluating the contribution of these groups to anti-apartheid activity in Britain during the 1980s, a number of factors become apparent. First, the character of the groups was shaped by the socio-political and racial context out of which they emerged. Despite the odds, groups such as WISC and BPM, whose members were well-travelled and educated professionals, were not averse to inter-racial alliances on equal terms with white progressives. By contrast, there was a younger generation of black radicals who came of age during the late 1970s and early 1980s fresh from confrontations with the police, education authorities and the criminal justice system. They felt acutely alienated from the status quo, and in their ideological outlook they placed a greater stress on the black-led agency in shaping and directing the anti-racist fight at home and abroad, including anti-apartheid activism. Such individuals belonged to organisations such as the Afro-Caribbean Self-Help Group, Pan-African Movement (UK), Black Action for the Liberation of South Africa (BALSA), and the All-African People's Revolutionary Party (A-APRP), which organised ALD to which white participants were not invited. Their radicalism was borne out of discontent with the failure of mainstream politics to deliver solutions to their grievances over discrimination in education, housing, the workplace, and law enforcement in their communities.

Second, black-led groups were similar in their emphasis on self-reliance and community cohesion in the fight against racism. However, the influence of black radical thought from African-American allies and pan-Africanist ideology was particularly strong among groups that stressed the importance of African history, the redistribution of land in countries such as Zimbabwe and South Africa, where ownership was predominantly in the hands of whites, and the necessity of armed struggle where European minorities exerted control over Africans. Echoing pan-African sentiment early in the twentieth century, moderate and radical groups shared the belief in the need for African transcontinental unity in the global fight against racism. Third, to varying degrees, the experiences of racism in Britain, the influence of African-American radicalism and the ideological split within the liberation movement fed into the character and expression of black anti-apartheid activism. The rest of this chapter will examine and assess the anti-apartheid activity of WISC, BPM and the Afro-Caribbean groups that centred their anti-apartheid activity on ALD. Although these groups had in common their wish to see apartheid eradicated, there were differences between them in the manner in which they conducted their own solidarity activities and the way in which they chose to interact with exiled representatives of the liberation movement and the AAM.

The origin of WISC

In 1958, the West Indian Standing Conference was formed in the wake of the racially motivated murder of Kelso Cochrane in Notting Hill, west London. His murder occurred at a time of rising racial tensions in areas of London and Nottingham where black and white residents competed for jobs and low-income housing in already deprived areas. In the immediate aftermath of Cochrane's murder, West Indian men began to take matters into their own hands by arming and defending themselves when attacked by white youths. Concerned Caribbean governments sent Sir Norman Manley, Premier of Jamaica, to assess the problem of racism in Britain and to make recommendations.⁴ From this, there was an agreement that a voluntary organisation should be established to cultivate good relations between the host white community and the newly settled West Indian community.

The organisation established to fulfil this role was the West Indian Standing Conference (WISC). It was an umbrella organisation under which many West Indian island associations and affiliated West Indian groups formed to build a collective front to meet the needs of their communities. Presenting the views of its members, WISC spoke in a collective voice to promote the interests of their members for racial justice and equality within British society. With its headquarters in London, there were also regional branches in cities around the country where black communities existed in significant numbers.

WISC's membership was multi-ethnic and comprised initially 28 different African-Caribbean organisations. Initially these groups were an extension of Caribbean political groups that had British affiliates but, as time went on, members were drawn from the wider African-Caribbean community in Britain. Membership of WISC included social-welfare community groups that were engaged in safeguarding the socio-economic welfare of the African-Caribbean community. For example, members were drawn from the East London West Indian Association, the People's Progressive Party (PPP) and the People's National Council (PNC) of Guyana, the People's National Party (PNP) of Jamaica and other organisations.⁵

WISC's founding principle was to bring races together, not to separate them, especially when whites and blacks shared the common objective of wanting to see the eradication of racism from society. In the earlier days, there were a number of white members, particularly as a number of the early West Indian male migrants had white wives who wanted to play a part in the activities of the organisation. The director of WISC, who had become a member while in his early twenties, explains the origin of the organisation in the following terms:

[It was] founded out of the hostilities that were acted out on Caribbean people, mainly in parts of London including Notting Hill, as well as Bristol and a number of other places. In those days there were what we called 'Teddy boys' who went around attacking black people. You've got the British National Party today, then you had Oswald Mosley who was a well-known racist and an MP, he had a significant following. Those guys used to go about beating up black people in the area where we now have carnival [...] so this gave birth to WISC.⁶

Members of WISC came from the first generation of postwar Caribbean migrants to Britain. These were mostly young men, and later women, who came to Britain to work and study. They were not black radicals who sought a change in the status quo. They simply wanted to contribute to, and integrate seamlessly into, the white society they encountered. They were moderate in their political expectations and sought fairness and equality before the law. When inspecting the membership lists and occupational background of these members during the 1960s and 1970s, it is notable that the WISC members tended to be middle-class churchgoing individuals.⁷ Among listed members are names with MBEs and OBEs, and these individuals were awarded and commended for work in their communities and in the wider population.⁸ Others achieved distinction within their chosen field as lawyers, doctors, teachers and businessmen. During the 1980s, perhaps the most famous members were the businessmen Lincoln Dyke and Dudley Dryden, reputedly the first black millionaires in postwar Britain.⁹ In WISC's archives there are names of members listed alongside their ownership of black businesses in London and other major cities. It is clear that WISC promoted and attracted support for its campaigns and social events through these business owners such as travel agents, hairdressers, grocers and others who were often located in the centre of black communities.

In analysing the significance of WISC among a number of community groups, one academic described the organisation as a 'broker group' in that from the beginning it sought to form a bridge between the white community and the newly settled black communities. According to Goulbourne, these groups were more likely to be moderate and conservative than radical in their nature. Their 'middle-man' position meant that they presented their case in terms that were acceptable to the status quo and to the institutions they sought to court. This was in the overall attempt to foster an open and continual dialogue in a mutually beneficial relationship.¹⁰ This characterisation holds some weight in relation to WISC; although the organisation was at first financially independent, WISC eventually received government funding during the 1980s.¹¹ However, this did not blunt its campaigning activity and although the organisation can be seen as 'moderate' in comparison to some of its counterparts, it never failed to take the government to task over issues that detrimentally affected the black community. The point was

made by Joseph A. Hunte, general secretary of WISC who was to coin the phrase 'equal opportunity':

In a democracy, the government has a responsibility to create an environment in which all its people, irrespective of race, colour, class, creed, sexuality or disability are given equal access to education and to participate equally in the creation of the wealth of the nation.¹²

Therefore, WISC's objective was to fight against discrimination in public life and to promote equal opportunity and fair treatment under the law for all racial groups. It was willing to achieve this objective in cooperation with other organisations, white or black, wherever common interests coincided at local, national and even international levels.¹³ Moreover, it was a willing partner in the multiracial attempts to fight discrimination in Britain.

This desire for a multiracial approach in fighting racism was demonstrated five years after WISC's formation. In 1964, when Martin Luther King was in London en route to Oslo to receive the Nobel Prize in recognition of his activism, he attended a reception on 7 December given in his honour by black community leaders. In a speech, he suggested that to fight racial injustice in Britain, blacks should organise themselves and launch a civil rights movement.¹⁴ This suggestion was favourably received by the audience, especially in the wake of the success of his non-violent strategy that had achieved the recent passage of the US Civil Rights Act that same year. Additionally, it was felt that an organisation was needed that could unify the myriad groups and organisations that existed among immigrant communities, to pool resources and represent their needs and concerns. Physical threats and violence against black and Asian immigrants seemed to be increasing with the activity of groups such as the north London branch of the Ku Klux Klan who attacked blacks, burned crosses and sent hate mail to black residents.¹⁵

In light of King's encouragement, black activists, alongside white allies, organised the Campaign Against Racial Discrimination (CARD) in February 1965. Under the chairmanship of David Pitt, the physician and civil rights campaigner, a conference was held in July and CARD was established as a multiracial organisation that brought together

WISC, the Indian Workers' Association, the National Federation of Pakistani Associations and others determined to present a united front to fight racial discrimination.¹⁶ Members were organised into a national council, an executive committee and special committees devoted to specific issues. The organisation called for anti-discrimination laws in housing, the repeal of the prejudicial Commonwealth Immigration Acts of 1962 and 1965, and equality of treatment in education for the children of immigrant families. CARD also supported the struggles of southern Africans and others throughout the African continent.¹⁷ CARD's objective was to fight racial discrimination and prejudice and achieve legislative solutions to the problems of racial integration. It was prepared to liaise with other organisations with similar goals. Although internal politics eventually caused CARD to split, its strategy of boycotts, protest marches and the courting of media publicity to highlight issues of discrimination served WISC well in its own independent campaigns.¹⁸ WISC not only sought government accountability and legislative intervention in domestic affairs of race discrimination, it also called the government to account in its relations with overseas governments that pursued discriminatory laws.¹⁹

The South Africa House incident

In 1976, when the world was once more alerted to the brutality of the apartheid government in clashes between the police and schoolchildren in Soweto, WISC members joined demonstrations organised by the AAM to protest against the South African government's violent suppression of African protests. On 26 June, WISC organised a 24-hour vigil of remembrance outside the South African Embassy for the victims. This date was chosen to coincide with the ANC's observance of 'Freedom Day' on 26 June in South Africa. In anti-apartheid circles, those seeking to demonstrate their protest against apartheid usually kept an all-night vigil outside South Africa House to commemorate those who had lost their lives fighting for freedom in southern Africa. In later years, participants also used the day to demonstrate solidarity with political prisoners in South Africa and Namibia. In preparation for the vigil, the police were notified and officers were present to safeguard against the potential threat of confrontations or disturbances. However, what transpired during this night demonstrated official complacency regarding racism within public institutions. It also provided WISC with

an opportunity to communicate with law and government officials over the failings of their institutions to deal with cases of racial prejudice within their own ranks and the lack of impartiality and accountability in sections of the police force.

During the evening of 26 June, 40 WISC members and supporters gathered with placards outside the South African Embassy. Members handed out literature and engaged passers-by in conversation regarding the plight of the victims of apartheid and the regime's activities in the wider region. One WISC member, Mrs Rupee Singh, a South African by birth, addressed a small group of the public:

I live in England because in this country I am able to live in dignity. I can stand here with a placard and discuss things with you knowing that these officers will not shoot me like the police did to the children in Soweto.²⁰

This comment provoked a police officer to respond, within the hearing of WISC members and the gathered audience, that white South Africans were 'Bloody right [...] If I was a policeman in South Africa I would have done the same thing [...] I really mean what I say; I would do the same thing to any of you lot!'²¹ When challenged by WISC members, two other police officers stepped forward to support their colleague by arguing that:

Despite the fact that the PC is a police officer, he has a right to his own opinion hence he is not in the wrong to say what he said at the time and place in question.²²

The general secretary of WISC who was present recalled that this outburst:

[Caused] concern among the crowd, finding that police officers were aggravating the situation to the extent that many of those who were on vigil became unsure about the relationship between the police officers who were there and themselves.²³

In fact the vigil was suspended earlier than planned on the morning of 27 June as it became clear that there could be trouble between

the police and the increasingly angry demonstrators. The general secretary of WISC, in a letter of complaint to Home Office minister Roy Jenkins, stated:

The reason for bringing this before you is to show that even in the presence of West Indians who are trying their utmost to create harmonious relations between police and black citizens, matters of this kind which are prevalent among PCs in the area are the general cause for the alienation of police relations with young people. If there were younger people at the vigil there might have been a number of arrests.²⁴

In the letter WISC demanded that strong measures be taken to reprimand the officers involved in the incident, as well as their removal from any situation where they would be in contact with black people.²⁵ Furthermore, WISC demanded a written apology over the offensive comments of the police officers,²⁶ yet it seems that the organisation never received one.²⁷ At the time, at least one black newspaper expressed outrage over the incident. The editor of one weekly informed its readers that:

The question we now pose to [police] Commissioner Sir Robert Mark is: is the uniform of the Metropolitan Police now to be associated most blatantly with such totally racist sentiments? We invite the Commissioner to kindly direct his answer to the PC.²⁸

Six months passed before WISC received a reply from the Home Office.²⁹ The letter informed WISC that the Commissioner of Police's report on the incident had been 'delayed'; no reason was provided. Stating what would become a common response to black groups and individuals who sought legal investigation into cases of racial injustice, the Director of Public Prosecutions informed WISC that evidence provided by the organisation regarding the incident was 'insufficient' to justify proceeding against the officers concerned.³⁰ This statement was given despite the fact that an enquiry into the matter had been set up under Chief Inspector Burrows. In the immediate aftermath of the incident, William Trant had written to Mrs Singh asking her to visit the WISC office and provide a full statement, including the names of

witnesses who could also be called upon to provide an account of the night. Within the statement Mrs Singh articulated her disillusionment with the police:

This incident shocked me and made me realise that I was a fool to have always had such respect for the British police. Because of this incident we decided to end our vigil at 4am rather than 6am as we wanted to avoid an unpleasant clash with the police after they had showed this open hostility to our cause [...] I wonder how many more British policemen, given the right to do so, would like to behave as their colleagues do in South Africa.³¹

Eventually, the Metropolitan Police Force began formal disciplinary proceedings against one of the officers, although the full details of this were never disclosed to WISC or the public.³² Furthermore, WISC was informed: 'It may be some time before the Commissioner is in a position to send a report at the conclusion of these proceedings.'³³

In an internal WISC report it was said of the Metropolitan Police Commissioner:

It is obvious that Sir Robert Mark has got a great deal of heart searching to do and that his renewed campaign at recruiting black policemen will have the same result as the first. Racism is deep rooted in the British police force. Only an inquiry of the type called for by this conference (WISC) will be able to determine the level and extent of this evil practice.³⁴

The Home Secretary Roy Jenkins, however, was not unaware of the endemic racism within sections of the police force. Rank-and-file policemen resented the race relations legislation that provided the opportunity for black people to report cases of racial harassment and discriminatory treatment by the police. In 1973, during a House of Commons debate on race relations, Roy Jenkins stated that since 1966 when the first black recruit joined the Metropolitan force, only 70 more had been recruited. This was less than one-tenth of 1 per cent of the force. In his words, it 'bore no relation to the fact that approximately 3 per cent of the population is coloured'.³⁵ During a speech at a police conference, Jenkins expressed a hope that police attitudes had changed

and that there would now be a warmer reception of black colleagues since his previous address to their annual conference in 1966. Tellingly, he told parliamentary colleagues that the reaction to his call for increased recruitment of black policemen was 'greeted with a noise which I did not take to be the sound of enthusiasm'.³⁶

WISC's aborted 24-hour vigil was significant with regard to the domestic issue of race. It demonstrated that institutions were limited by their apathy in recognising the depth of racism in their own ranks and the rest of society. Furthermore, the irony was not lost on WISC members, who noted that the British government continued to maintain and justify its connection with the racist Nationalist government in South Africa.³⁷ Comparisons were made despite marked differences in the treatment of blacks in both countries. During the summer of 1976, barely two months after the aborted vigil, the Notting Hill Carnival saw the worst ever clashes between the police and black youth. Once more, the members of the African-Caribbean community accused the police of heavy-handedness and racist behaviour in their handling of the situation. During the latter part of the 1970s and the early 1980s, the disproportionate use of the 'Sus' laws by police against black people sustained the feeling of oppression among the black community.³⁸

After the vigil episode, WISC did not let the hostile encounter with members of the Metropolitan Police hamper its efforts to educate and raise the awareness of the public to the injustice of apartheid. From the late 1970s the organisation, alongside its domestic concerns, seized every opportunity to protest against the British government's support of the regime.³⁹ Furthermore, it encouraged its members to follow consumer boycotts in support of AAM campaigns. WISC encouraged members to mount pickets outside shops, stores, supermarkets and 'all retail establishments selling South African goods'.⁴⁰ It also called for the banning of advertising and any promotional material regarding South Africa on British television, radio and in the press, especially while the state of emergency continued and whilst apartheid remained in place.⁴¹ WISC also called upon black people to assist the disinvestment campaign by:

Removing personal savings from bank accounts and any interests from companies and financial institutions which continue to maintain investment and other connections with apartheid.⁴²

More controversially during the 1980s, signed petitions for the immediate release of Nelson Mandela were made in conjunction with collections 'in support of the armed struggle for freedom and justice in South Africa'.⁴³ Raising money specifically for the armed struggle went further than the AAM were prepared to go, at least publicly. The ANC's use of sabotage and armed struggle rather than non-violent protest after 1961 had created a problem for the AAM, which had attracted broad-based support for its non-violent opposition to apartheid. Nevertheless, the AAM took the position that it was for the individuals directly involved in the liberation struggle to decide on the method of their struggle. However, Robert Hughes, chair of the AAM, argues that from the mid-1970s the AAM was openly and unambiguously supporting the armed struggle. It seems that the ANC's rejection of urban terrorism made this possible.⁴⁴ The AAM's approach to the armed struggle did not please all; some individuals threatened to withdraw their support and some did leave the movement because it did not categorically reject violence.⁴⁵ The year before Mandela's release, the movement issued the following statement in response to the recurring controversy and public concern about the ANC's use of violence in its attempt to remove the white regime:

As part of our solidarity [...] we support their right to determine for themselves how to conduct the struggle against apartheid. This does not of course imply in any way that we condone the use of violence here in Britain. Political means are available to us to seek to secure a change in British policy towards South Africa. But the vote-less majority in South Africa have no such liberties, and that is why the ANC for many years now has sought to bring the apartheid regime to the negotiating table by a variety of means, including armed struggle.⁴⁶

For the AAM, the issue of the armed struggle always threatened to stand in its way of recruiting a broad-based support among those who were sympathetic but who balked at supporting the use of violence that could take the lives of 'innocent' groups of people, which included whites. Significantly, when Oliver Tambo was questioned by the Parliamentary Select Committee in 1985 about the ANC's use of violence, he categorically rejected the 'terrorist' label, arguing that the ANC had

been restrained for many years. Rather it had been forced by the violence of the apartheid regime into fighting a war, meeting violence with violence. It was unfortunate that in wars innocent people were killed.⁴⁷ The AAM was not always unequivocal in its support of the ANC's armed struggle; it was recognised that the armed struggle alienated potential supporters as well as opponents.⁴⁸

Anti-Botha protest

It was not until the mid-1980s that WISC as an organisation once more moved anti-apartheid activism up its list of priorities. The catalyst was the announcement of the visit of the South African President P.W. Botha to Britain for talks with the Prime Minister. This galvanised not only the AAM but organisations such as WISC, which had a concern for civil liberties and matters of equality at home and abroad. Both AAM and WISC members were visible side by side at South Africa House picketing in protest at the planned Botha visit. Part of the crowds of anti-apartheid supporters listened to speakers such as Richard Balfé MEP, and members of the British Parliament such as Tony Benn, Jeremy Corbyn and Peter Hain who called for the isolation of the Botha government.⁴⁹ In the run-up to Botha's visit, there was a flurry of activity by WISC members who publicly appealed to the Prime Minister not to entertain discussions with the South African President on British soil. WISC wrote to the press and sent out literature and flyers to members to attach to their premises and distribute to the public explaining the reason for its objection to the visit.⁵⁰ The organisation issued a press statement in which it declared that Botha's visit was especially an insult to black Britons because:

Black people fought in the last war, under the British flag, when Great Britain fought to destroy racism in the form of Nazism which was based upon the concept of the so-called superior race. Apartheid South Africa is similar in its practical intention of degradation of man. It delimits black fellow human beings who are capable of unlimited achievement, to the role of sub-animal status without rights in their inherent country. Therefore Great Britain *must destroy* it and not accommodate it. Britain must practice what it preaches or it shall lose its customary position of credibility.⁵¹

For WISC, this apathy to the sensitivities of black citizens was part of the wider indifference of the ruling establishment that refused to acknowledge the historic contribution that blacks of the Empire had made to Britain's economic standing in the world. The organisation informed readers that:

Black people have made and continue to make, significant contributions which have transformed the UK society especially in its social, economic and cultural recovery since its costly experience in human and financial resources, because of that war against racist Nazism [...] black people like white people must have similar rights of *equal opportunity* in South Africa or in fact anywhere they choose to live permanently.⁵²

WISC viewed Botha's invitation to Britain as a snub to the black presence in Britain. Its denunciation of the British government for inviting Botha conveyed the outrage and sense of betrayal felt by WISC members and the black community.⁵³ In a further statement that showed that WISC members viewed white European support of South Africa as tantamount to racial nepotism of the worst kind, it was noted that:

The invitation to the leader of the apartheid regime of South Africa to talks in London by the British Prime Minister, underlines a kind of indifference to the feelings of black people against the system of apartheid as practised in South Africa [...] our solidarity with the struggle of our brothers and sisters in Southern Africa must not fail.⁵⁴

It is clear that WISC held Britain and the United States responsible for the apartheid state's strength and preservation. For members of WISC, securing African political freedom in South Africa had become a matter of honour for blacks in Britain and the rest of the world. The repression of Africans in South Africa was a visible and painful reminder that in societies where white-skinned Europeans controlled the state, blacks were kept at the bottom of the socio-economic and political order. Accordingly, WISC noted:

We witness the reinforcing of racism as the USA and Britain with her European partners choose to sustain South Africa's white controlled economy in preference to a moral stance which will save black lives. The choices made by these white nations are an illustration of their contempt for black people and a statement supporting the view that the black race is expendable.⁵⁵

The black press also condemned the invitation of Mrs Thatcher's government to P.W. Botha. The *Caribbean Times*, a popular weekly newspaper stated: 'We [...] emphatically condemn the British Prime Minister for extending the invitation and for the implied contempt shown to the black people of Britain.'⁵⁶ Readers were informed that the British government had a responsibility to its black citizens at home as well as living up to its claim of impartiality in matters of race in South Africa:

Mrs Thatcher represents the leadership of what is now a multi-racial society, which, despite many faults, constitutes Great Britain including over 3 million people of Afro-Caribbean and Asian origin. The Prime Minister of South Africa represents a minority regime of apartheid that denies equality, self-respect and equal participation and even physical safety to the majority black population of that country and is therefore a regime of oppression, immorality and injustice. Furthermore WISC strongly urges Mrs. Thatcher to reconsider political sanctions to a racist leader of a racist regime.⁵⁷

WISC argued that the ruling political and business elites were concerned less with justice for the victims of the apartheid state than with the maintenance of trade and investment interests under the white minority regime. In its critique of the government's intransigence, WISC placed the government firmly on the side of Botha's regime in its opposition to African freedom fighters, described as 'terrorists' by the British Prime Minister. WISC also argued that supporters of Pretoria in Europe displayed double standards in their assessment of the struggles of repressed groups struggling for political freedoms. Just as modern European democracy came about through revolutionary struggle; it was argued that there should be an empathy with the freedom struggle in southern Africa.

In response to such criticism, government ministers stated that the invitation to Botha did not signal a shift in the government's condemnation of apartheid but was part of the solution as it offered an opportunity to convince Botha and his entourage that apartheid must be dispensed with. WISC continued to apply pressure by writing directly to the Prime Minister as well as to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO).⁵⁸ There exists no record of a reply from the Prime Minister's Office. However, taking the moral high ground, an FCO minister informed WISC that:

The government has long made clear its wish to see change in South Africa, and on other regional issues. We believe this can only be brought about by dialogue with those countries and individuals immediately concerned. Mr Botha's visit to Europe affords a natural opportunity to put across our views to the South African government at the highest level, and we think it would have been wrong not to take it [...] the visit in no sense means we condone apartheid, any more than talking to the Russians implies we condone communism.⁵⁹

Another official assured WISC that: 'The visit in no way represents a weakening of the government's consistent resolve to promote racial equality and integration in this country [...] the government believes that it is only through dialogue that we can hope to influence South Africa's policies.'⁶⁰ The government's rationale for Botha's invitation was still unacceptable to WISC members as well as the wider anti-apartheid movement. Moreover, WISC members took part in an all-night protest vigil starting on the evening of Friday 11 June 1984. It also contributed financially to an unprecedented full-page advertisement placed in *The Times* newspaper, which published the names of many anti-apartheid groups and individual activists that disapproved of Botha's visit.⁶¹ Black community leaders were determined to mobilise large numbers of black protesters at the planned anti-Botha demonstrations. During this time the AAM reported that:

At the initiative of a number of black councillors in London, the June 2nd mobilising committee was convened at a meeting on 15 May with the specific aim of mobilising within the black

community. It was attended by editors and proprietors of black newspapers and other representatives of the black community in London. This has resulted in excellent publicity in London's black press especially [...] the Race Today Collective, the Africa Liberation Committee, the WISC, the Black Standing Conference against Apartheid and many other local black organizations actively mobilising against the visit.⁶²

Also, members of WISC were present at the AAM's anti-Botha mobilising meeting held on 26 March in Camden Town Hall, north London. In attendance were nearly 100 different organisations. WISC participated in the national anti-Botha demonstration held on Saturday 2 June 1984, in which marchers walked from Hyde Park to Whitehall and marched past the Prime Minister's Downing Street residence. Anti-apartheid activists handed in a letter with signatures of the hundreds of people who deplored Botha's visit. Members also attended an anti-apartheid rally and festival on the South Bank organised by the Greater London Council and the AAM. During the event, members helped to distribute leaflets, posters, stickers and badges. Despite the best efforts of WISC members and the wider anti-apartheid movement, Botha's visit went ahead as proposed. Nevertheless, anti-apartheid activists left the government in no doubt as to the strength of feeling that thousands of people felt about the racism of Botha's regime. Many anti-apartheid supporters gathered the following year when a bust of Nelson Mandela by sculptor Ian Walters was unveiled in the presence of the exiled ANC President Oliver Tambo, and GLC councillors such as Ken Livingstone.

Memorial services for the victims of apartheid

In 1984 and over the next two years, WISC organised annual church services to remember and pray for the liberation movement and the victims of apartheid. This was an effective way to ensure a high profile and to provide publicity about the struggle against apartheid. These services provided WISC with the opportunity to invite dignitaries whose attendance lent weight to the growing anti-apartheid consensus. Moreover, it was a mark of the respect that WISC had attained, through its advocacy work, that a significant number of parliamentarians from both sides of the house and public officials agreed to attend these services. With other organisations, WISC held events to publicise

ongoing struggles for political freedom. WISC was a founder member of the UK Council of the International Year of Peace, designated by the UN in 1986; a service held in 1986 was dedicated to this.⁶³ All the services were held in central London at St Martin-in-the-Fields church.⁶⁴ Representatives from the main political parties attended, including Neil Kinnock, the leader of the opposition, and his wife Glenys. Despite an invitation, the Prime Minister's office sent apologies. Leading figures of the black community were in attendance such as Lord and Lady Pitt of Hampstead, local politicians and representatives from the AAM and the International Defence and Aid Fund, such as Ethel De Keyser. There was a strong contingent of Commonwealth representatives, and exiled representatives from the ANC, such as Solly Smith, the chief representative of the ANC in London, Michael Hishikishitya from SWAPO, and PAC figures.

Also in attendance were high commissioners representing West Indian countries including Dominica, Guyana and Jamaica. British MPs in attendance were Tony Banks and his wife, and Harry Greenway and his wife. Amongst the churchmen present were the Bishop of Stepney; Jim Thompson, dean of Westminster; the very Revd Michael Mayne; Fr Lamont Phillips; and the mayors and mayoresses of Southwark, Lambeth, Ealing, Camden and Newham. Councillors attended from the London boroughs of Southwark, Haringey, Brent, Wandsworth, Kensington and Chelsea, and representatives from the Commission of Racial Equality (CRE). Members of the Afro-West Indian Association also attended. Each year, the number of those in attendance reached nearly 100 people.⁶⁵

WISC was fortunate to secure the venue of St Martin-in-the-Fields for these services. The choice was not by chance; the location of the church had strategic value, as a member of the Southwark Race Equality Unit stated:

We believe the location will be of paramount importance in projecting our views; because it is adjacent to the South Africa embassy. We also believe your recent candle vigil on the steps of St Martins was very effective indeed.⁶⁶

Undoubtedly the church's officials had sympathy for the anti-apartheid cause; however, they made it clear that the memorial services could only be conducted 'on the strict understanding that this is an act of worship with no political references or overtones at all'.⁶⁷ But a non-political

stance was not easy to maintain. A member of WISC advised Lord Pitt who gave the keynote address that: 'The South West African People's Organisation has made a request for the Namibia question, which has been largely overlooked, to be raised and perhaps you will note this also in your speech.'⁶⁸ Unfortunately copies of the speeches or sermons have not been preserved. However, church authorities were obviously not too disgruntled by the content of the speeches because the services continued for a further two years.

The hymns and bible readings chosen expressed the themes of freedom and redemption. Through this, a clear message was given. One of the scriptural passages chosen was from the apocalyptic book of Revelation. The passage speaks of a 'New heaven and new earth', and details the emergence of a 'New Jerusalem' where the people of God will dwell and where He would, 'Wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away.'⁶⁹ This undoubtedly would have resonated with those suffering under earthly systems of injustice. Perhaps more comforting for those who believed in an ultimate spiritual judgement, a further passage informed listeners that: 'He that overcometh shall inherit all things [...] but the [...] abominable, and murderers [...] and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone.'⁷⁰ In other passages selected for public reading, the themes of slavery, freedom and ultimate redemption predominated. Again it took little leap of the imagination to apply these hopes to the peoples of southern Africa fighting against oppression and struggling for freedom.

Unfortunately, prominent figures within the black community were not always available to attend these services. One year, the Rt Revd Dr Wilfred Wood, the most prominent black member of the Anglican Church in Britain, could not fulfil a request to be the keynote speaker. Writing to the Bishop's office, the director of WISC stated:

You are the one and only black Bishop in the whole of the UK [...] it is important to us and the black community and to those who will be in the congregation that the sermon is delivered by you. The service will have no political undertones. It is being organised [...] out of our concern for the needless spilling of blood in South Africa, for the world peace and the future of mankind.⁷¹

In his reply, the Bishop attributed his lack of participation to WISC's failure to consult with him first:

[If] as you state it is so important that I should be the preacher why did you not think of consulting me before a date was fixed for the service [...] I am only too conscious of my responsibility towards the black community [and] regret that this lack of foresight has robbed me of an opportunity to express my solidarity with those who are suffering in South Africa.⁷²

This uncomfortable exchange demonstrates the pressures that prominent members of the black community faced as spokespersons for the community. Black organisations sought to use their prominence and 'cross-over' appeal to raise the profile of various issues. Funds were raised from the services of St Martin-in-the Fields as well as from other sponsored events such as 'dinner/dances' which were popular and well attended.⁷³ WISC members attended public meetings where ANC or AAM representatives were speaking. On one occasion, the ANC sent an invitation to WISC to attend a briefing on the current situation in South Africa. At this meeting two of the speakers included Thabo Mbeki, the ANC official responsible for information, and Revd John Lamola, Baptist Minister of Churches in the Homeland territory of Bophutatswana.⁷⁴ In this way, WISC members came into contact with representatives of the liberation movement who were able to brief members on the most recent news of the liberation struggle in southern Africa. Other black figures outside of the WISC membership also raised awareness of the struggle. During the mid-1980s Guyanese-born Sybil Phoenix, a formidable campaigner and prominent community activist in Lewisham, south London, organised a number of Christmas services at her local Methodist Church. The money gathered from the church collection was sent to help African families in townships throughout South Africa.⁷⁵

South African visitors

A number of visitors and exiles from southern Africa also visited WISC's offices and informed members about aspects of the liberation struggle. In turn, they learnt about the civil rights advocacy of WISC.⁷⁶ The Foreign Office invited a number of key South African figures to visit

Britain to give evidence before parliamentary select committees, or to visit institutions in Britain that promoted equality in public life. These invitations were part of an effort by the government to achieve a balanced perspective and the chance to hear first-hand accounts of the domestic and political situation in the region. It is perhaps an indication of how seriously WISC's work was taken in its efforts to facilitate racial equality that the Foreign Office at this time often included visits to its offices for southern African visitors. Undoubtedly officials viewed WISC as moderate and respectable.

One such visitor was Dr Nthato Motlana, a member of the Transvaal branch of the UDF, who visited WISC offices as part of the FCO's sponsored trip to Britain in September 1985.⁷⁷ During his encounter with WISC representatives such as William Trant and C. Byfield, he also came into contact with key figures in the black community. They included the Guyanese media and publishing entrepreneur, Arif Ali of Hansib Publications, who published the newspapers *Caribbean Times* and *West Indian World*, which carried articles sympathetic to the anti-apartheid struggle. There was also Roy Sawh, the radical author, civil rights campaigner and founder of the group 'Black Rights', and Lionel Morrison, the South African-born head of the Commission of Racial Equality.⁷⁸ There were also local West Indian councillors such as Sam Springer, the former mayor of Hackney, east London. Discussions focused on WISC's role and function in British society and its monitoring and efforts to promote equal opportunities in public life.⁷⁹ Therefore, contacts were made between visiting South Africans and prominent members of the black community. WISC provided the forum where these not dissimilar worlds could meet and exchange views and experiences. The FCO encouraged these contacts, but it was up to WISC members to capitalise on these connections. From the official perspective, however, WISC was not viewed as a threat to the status quo. The FCO viewed Motlana's visit and that of others as necessary:

To enable influential members of all communities in South Africa to see Britain and British institutions and to discuss contemporary issues including the problems of South Africa with a wide cross section of informed British people [... the visit] is to give him a first hand opportunity to exchange views on political, economic

and cultural matters with leading British organisations and to see something of British institutions and practices.⁸⁰

Undoubtedly, interactions with South African visitors provided the opportunity for members of WISC and representatives from other groups to discuss issues of race and discrimination in a British context. Strategies to combat these problems were also discussed.⁸¹ WISC members continued to support the campaigns for Nelson Mandela's release and for the end of apartheid. After Mandela's release in 1990, and the unbanning of the ANC and other anti-government organisations in following years, WISC members applauded Mandela's magnanimity and the country's progress to full participatory democracy.⁸²

Origins of the Black Parents Movement

In addition to WISC, there were some black groups that superficially seemed to have little direct interest in the politics of southern Africa as they were so heavily involved in local community politics. However, the issues of racial equality for which they fought in the British domestic context spurred them to consider the situation of comparable communities abroad. One of these groups was the London-based Black Parents Movement (BPM), which was established in 1975 after the assault by police on a black youth named Cliff McDaniel. The assault took place outside his school in north London, and his schoolfriends Michael and Keith La Rose, with the full support of their parents, determined that this should not go unchallenged. The boys were the sons of John La Rose, a key figure within a small but significant group of West Indian-born intellectuals and artists based in London.⁸³ La Rose was a well-known publisher and activist within the black community and, with his first wife Irma, he founded the George Padmore Supplementary School in 1969 to meet the educational needs of black children and to reverse the damage caused by the negative cultural stereotypes experienced by black children in the classroom.⁸⁴ The school offered supplementary lessons in English, science and mathematics and exposed students to the history and culture of the Caribbean and Africa, a history often missing from the mainstream school curriculum.⁸⁵ Alongside the BPM, the sons of La Rose and other young people formed the Black Youth Movement (BYM). The objectives of the BPM and

BYM were to organise defence for black youth who had become victims of the police. Political and cultural aims shaped the activities of these groups. These included organising black parents into groups to lobby educational authorities for reform, and expanding the supplementary schools or the activity of the BYM that organised sport and cultural activities for unemployed black youths.⁸⁶

The parents of BPM, which included John La Rose and the poet Linton Kwesi Johnson, challenged local education authorities on the high numbers of black children excluded from schools. They pushed for reform in this practice.⁸⁷ These black parents had high expectations for their children in the British school system. It was believed that education in Britain, as in the Caribbean, was a means of social and economic mobility. In too many cases, the expectations of black parents did not match the views of teachers and education officials who often seemed to hold lower educational expectations for their black pupils compared to white pupils. This meant, for instance, that many black pupils were encouraged and directed towards less intellectually challenging subjects such as sport rather than the sciences. Campaigning on these issues radicalised the members of the BPM – a mixture of artists, educators, medical and legal professionals. Addressing racism in the education system and contesting cases of suspensions and expulsions also led to an interest in cases of defence against deportation and immigration. These issues affected black communities disproportionately during the late 1970s and the 1980s, as immigration laws coupled with harsh policing and racism in public institutions adversely affected black lives. The campaigners' concern extended beyond the black community, with members supporting the struggles of working-class white communities and voicing public support for the miners on strike during the early 1980s.⁸⁸

The black activists of the north London BPM, which was soon replicated in other parts of the city and around the country, maintained strong connections with the Caribbean and Africa and were well briefed on political and trade union struggles abroad. Support grew for dissident and pro-democracy groups in the Caribbean and Africa.⁸⁹ For example, a group calling itself 'The Committee for the Release of Political Prisoners in Kenya' referenced the address of New Beacon Bookshop, as a point of contact on its literature. This bookshop, opened in 1966, was owned by John La Rose. Using the facilities of the bookshop, the group distributed

pamphlets that condemned Daniel arap Moi's repressive regime in Kenya. Members of the BPM also supported Maurice Bishop's government in Grenada during the revolution between the years 1979 to 1983, and supported dissidents in Guyana who opposed the repressive regime of Forbes Burnham. This interest in Guyanese politics was led by Eric and Jessica Huntley, Guyanese-born activists and owners of the bookshop Bogle L'Ouverture in west London. They were collaborators with John La Rose and other members of the BPM. The Marxist Guyanese intellectual Walter Rodney, before returning to Guyana, was a close associate and a frequent visitor to Bogle L'Ouverture and played an active part in the debates and discussions organised by this circle of individuals, which also included the Marxist intellectual C.L.R. James.⁹⁰

The BPM's anti-apartheid activism

The BPM's engagement in anti-apartheid activity was a natural part of its wider concern with matters of racial equality and justice domestically and internationally. During the years 1982 to 1995, members played an active part in the International Book Fair of Radical Black and Third World Books. The book fair was organised jointly by Bogle L'Ouverture, New Beacon Books and *Race Today* Collective Publications.⁹¹ The book fair celebrated the cultural and political achievements of African communities around the globe and publishers attended from five continents. Forums and discussions addressed the key issues of the day and leading writers and artists participated in a range of cultural events. Even though the book fair was initiated and organised by the Caribbean section of the black population in Britain, its influence reached regions as far away as India, Pakistan, South Africa, the Caribbean, Central America, the United States, Germany, France and Belgium from which participants came.⁹² One commentator characterises its significance in the following terms:

It was politically a continuation in the tradition of the 1945 Pan African Congress held in Manchester which laid the basis for the post World War Two independence movements [...] the book fair operating as it did at the interface between culture and politics provided opportunities for cultural expression and for informed discourse on local and international issues.⁹³

The southern African presence was strongly represented at the book fair from the mid-1980s onwards. ANC members in exile in London, writers and artists from southern Africa, and anti-apartheid campaigners, kept audiences fully informed of the challenges faced by black people living under apartheid. Among the South African-born participants were the academic Shirley Mashiane Talbot, the poet and novelist Mandla Langa, and the poet and editor Vusi Mchunu.⁹⁴ Representatives from the ANC and anti-apartheid groups such as International Defence and Aid distributed leaflets, information packs and pamphlets, and in the case of the latter, provided the opportunity for those in attendance to join as members.⁹⁵ During most years in which the book fair was held, the International Defence and Aid Fund mounted exhibits and in the mid-1980s it displayed a major exhibition that centred on Nelson Mandela and his life's work. Publishers such as the Zimbabwean Harare Publishing House, which published political and historical titles, the Zimbabwe Publishing House, and Polypotton, which published plays written by black South Africans, were also represented. A publisher from Polypotton told the audience, 'through the medium of drama, we the reader or the observer can learn about how South Africans, both black and white, relate to each other because of apartheid'.⁹⁶

At the fifth fair in 1986, the liberation struggle in South Africa was the subject of a major exhibition. Mandela's reply to Botha's offer of freedom, which was sent through his daughter Zindzi, was printed in full in the event programmes that were distributed to all participants.⁹⁷ Discussions centred on the film *Adapt or Die*, which looked at the Trade Union Movement and workers' struggles in South Africa, and there were South African poetry readings that showcased poetry for a 'Free Azania'. The next year, discussions focused on 'The Struggle for Southern Africa' and representatives were present from the Metal and Allied Workers' Union of South Africa. Similarly, talks such as 'South Africa, The Struggle for Social Liberation' or 'Generations of Resistance to the Apartheid Regime' were given by liberation movement representatives such as Don Noels, Sam Nolutshungu, Molefe Pheto and Zola Zembe. There was also a women's concert to honour and stand in solidarity with the liberation struggles of southern African women, with artists participating from the Caribbean, Central America, Africa, India and Europe.⁹⁸ The Nigerian playwright Wole Soyinka's speech 'The Nkomati Era' opened the fourth international book fair, in March 1985,

and was reprinted in full in the event programme.⁹⁹ The Committee on South African War resisters also had a stall at the ninth book fair, held in 1989.¹⁰⁰ The numbers of people passing through these annual events varied from 1,000 to over 2,000.¹⁰¹ From this activity and the information on southern Africa provided by participants at the book fair, members of the BPM and BYM were fully informed and determined to galvanise the public into supporting anti-apartheid campaigns. In 1986 the BPM formed a subgroup called 'Black Action on South Africa'. Writing to the ANC, Michael la Rose stated:

The Black Parents Movement has decided to call a meeting involving representatives of black organisations and interested black individuals [...] to discuss the co-ordination of independent black solidarity action in Britain in support of our heroic black brothers and sisters in South Africa (Azania).¹⁰²

A wide range of black organisations were invited to the meeting. They included the Black Liberation Front, the Black Unity and Freedom Party, Hackney Black People's Association, PACM (Headstart), Waltham Forest Black Parents & Youth Association, Broadwater Farm Youth Association, Race Today, and the West Indian Standing Conference. Representatives were also sent from the Black Consciousness Movement of Azania, Azania Worker and the ANC. La Rose's letter to the ANC seems to be one of the few from a representative of a black British activist group written directly to the ANC. In it, he stressed the need for unity among black groups supporting the liberation struggle. It is clear that BPM was keen to build up a joint front of solidarity of black groups in Britain to support the liberation movement and the victims of apartheid. Acknowledging differences he states:

We think that the time is now right for black organisations to attempt to co-ordinate and extend our activities while retaining our independence of action. We feel it is essential at this time that blacks in Britain should be seen to be taking initiatives on South Africa [and] that black organisations should inform each other about action they are taking on South Africa [...] we should not be sitting idly by crying on Thatcher to apply sanctions.¹⁰³

The ANC's response to this letter is not currently among the available papers; moreover due to factionalism, a single body representing black activists against apartheid was never realised. The letter demonstrates, however, that there was a desire to form a unified body of black activists to campaign against apartheid. Moreover, a range of black campaigning groups continued to demonstrate their support for the liberation struggle in South Africa in numerous ways. Annual events such as African Liberation Day engendered collaboration between groups to inform and encourage local communities to denounce apartheid and support the liberation movement. La Rose's letter also clearly demonstrates that the BPM recognised the necessity to mobilise the black community from the grass-roots to play a prominent part in building support for the struggle for political freedom in South Africa. It did not choose sides between the ANC and PAC, and unlike other black activist groups it did not criticise the AAM. Instead, BPM sought to motivate local communities, black and white, to protest against the apartheid state, withhold their patronage from businesses and banks that directly or indirectly supported their South African counterparts, and to pressurise the British government to apply sanctions against the regime.

Drawing inspiration from the numerous consumer boycotts organised by the AAM during the 1980s, the BPM decided to target local businesses that handled South African goods. In the process, it sought to educate the local community regarding matters of racial injustice in South Africa and the personal responsibility needed to increase the international pressure for its demise. Between the years 1984 and 1986, members of the BPM organised a boycott of South African goods sold at the local branch of Tesco on Stroud Green Road in north London, and smaller shops were also targeted. Members produced and distributed information on the apartheid state, and how to identify South African goods. The anti-apartheid protesters were determined to highlight the commercial links of local businesses and supermarkets with their South African counterparts, and the fact that both sides profited while the black majority were denied political and socio-economic rights. The Consumers were encouraged to think about the provenance of these purchases and were handed the responsibility of challenging South African trade through boycotting their goods. Tesco was encouraged 'to stop supporting the racist apartheid regime of Botha and General Magnus Malan by selling South African goods'.¹⁰⁴ Writing to the management of Tesco, the BPM argued for the

necessity of consumer boycotts in the light of the failure of the government and local businesses to impose formal sanctions and a boycott against South African goods. The company was also warned that members of the BPM intended to widen the consumer boycott if necessary, to include other Tesco branches in London. This proposal was potentially a serious threat given the location of most branches of the chain in multicultural communities in the city. The racism of the apartheid state had the potential to taint Anglo-South African business and trade. By capitalising on the guilt-by-association angle in its arguments, anti-apartheid advocates such as BPM could prick the consciences of the public and the business community, especially when threatened with the loss of revenue from the consumer.

Members of the BPM continued to picket outside the local Tesco in Stroud Green, north London during the mid-1980s, and produced many flyers and leaflets instructing shoppers to complain to the management about their stocks of South African goods. Shoppers were also told to spread the action against South African goods to other stores. Pamphlets handed out to shoppers denounced the South African state President, P.W. Botha, and his death squads. In 1986, the pamphlets commemorated the tenth anniversary of the deaths of the youth of Soweto in 1976.¹⁰⁵ Eventually, this deluge of information targeted at consumers and supermarket staff paid off. In 1986, two years after BPM started picketing, it received a letter from Tesco headquarters that informed the group:

We are now able to inform you that we are instructing our buyers to purchase as little as possible from South Africa. And then only when there is no alternative sources of supply.¹⁰⁶

Tesco's climb-down vindicated the action taken by the BPM and other groups and demonstrated how powerful local initiatives could be in spreading public awareness and understanding of Britain's own complicity in sustaining apartheid.

African Liberation Day

At the same time that the BPM was pursuing its campaigns, there were black groups in other parts of London and around the country that chose to picket and distribute literature to alert local black communities and

the general public about apartheid. Some individuals chose to take a lone stand. The activist Spartacus R, for example, a well-known figure among Brixton's black community, began a one-man campaign in 1987 of picketing his local Tesco branch every week for over a year. Despite several arrests, he continued to distribute leaflets, walking up and down with placards and slogans urging shoppers to boycott South African goods.¹⁰⁷

The annual commemoration of African Liberation Day (ALD) became an opportunity to inform and encourage black communities supporting black struggles around the globe. Black activist groups used the day to focus attention on the liberation struggles in southern Africa. Activities involved panel discussions and debates among invited speakers, question and answer sessions, the dissemination of literature, and cultural and social activities celebrating aspects of black culture. In the city of Birmingham, the Afro-Caribbean Self-Help Group organised marches, and its members usually paraded with banners to Handsworth Park where speakers criticised the government and local authorities who had failed to address the grievances of the black community.¹⁰⁸ Activists also talked with bystanders en route and recruited as many as possible to join the crowd.¹⁰⁹ A local photographer, Vanley Burke, has captured this and other events in the community's history during the last 30 years, and his work comprises a rich pictorial record of those times.¹¹⁰ This day was also marked in black communities across the country as well as in America, the Caribbean and European countries with substantial black communities such as France and Germany. Marking this day had roots in the Pan-African Movement. The origins of African Freedom Day lay in the early years of African decolonisation. In 1958, the first conference of independent African states was convened in Ghana with Kwame Nkrumah, the President, leading the proceedings. Leaders of eight independent African states called for an 'African Freedom Day' to mark the annual progress of the African liberation movements around the continent. This day came to symbolise the African effort to break loose from foreign exploitation and domination. After the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) was established on 25 May 1963, this date was proclaimed as African Liberation Day.

The Nkrumahist Pan-African Movement with its ideology of African empowerment, self-determination and the need for political and economic freedom had a powerful impact on black diasporic communities across the

world. This was so especially in America where race-conscious African-Americans in the Black Power Movement, or those who empathised with Garveyism and the principles of racial empowerment, were seeking to identify with their African roots and assert their African identity.¹¹¹ Black activists in the diaspora began to take a keen interest in the anti-imperial struggles on the African continent, particularly in the flashpoint areas of the Congo, Biafra and southern Africa. In the United States, the radical African-American activist Stokely Carmichael concluded that the political expression of pan-Africanism would be an African revolution. Since a revolution can be defined by the struggle over land, and the black man's land base is in Africa, then the most concrete form of pan-Africanism would involve a return to Africa to participate in the progressive transformation of society that ensured the use of African land and resources for the benefit of the masses rather than the elite.¹¹²

These sets of beliefs facilitated the rebirth of the Pan-African movement in the United States. In 1970, the meeting of the Congress of African People in Atlanta pioneered the observance of African Liberation Day (ALD). In Britain, ALD began on 25 May 1973, influenced by the marking of a similar day among African-Americans and the visits of Stokely Carmichael, Amiri Baraka and others. The African Liberation Committee sponsored a public meeting on that day at Brixton Town Hall, with a cultural presentation at the Keskidee Centre in Holloway, north London.¹¹³ Alongside the contributions of the poetry of the Caribbean poet Andrew Salkey and messages from representatives from the ANC, PAC, SWAPO and others, it was clear that this event reinforced the feelings of solidarity among people of African descent with the struggles of Africans in the African continent.

Despite this encouraging start, the Pan-African movement did not entrench itself in Britain. Internal disputes mainly accounted for this. However, a strong pan-African sentiment remained and the continued practice of marking ALD reaffirmed a determination to stand in solidarity with struggles elsewhere. In July 1974, at the Sixth Pan-African Conference in Dar es Salaam, there were representatives in attendance from Britain. Various speakers stressed the importance of marking this day and, from this time onwards, a national observance of ALD in Britain was held, beginning in Nottingham in 1975, Liverpool in the following year and then Birmingham in 1977.¹¹⁴ The following year there was a march under heavy police surveillance from Brixton

to Clapham Common in south London. Well-known black campaigners and activists such as Ron Phillips and Horace Campbell were joined by African-Americans from black-empowerment programmes such as the Institute for Positive Education in Chicago.¹¹⁵ In 1979 the venue moved to the West Indian Centre in Manchester, and in 1980 it was held simultaneously in Nottingham, Manchester, Birmingham and London. This decentralisation reflected the urban spread of black communities in Britain. Radical black groups that adhered to the pan-Africanist vision, and organised the programme of events for ALD, had consistent objectives. These groups included the African Liberation Committee, the Black Unity and Freedom Party, All African People's Revolutionary Party, Black Action Against the Liberation of South Africa, and the Afro-Caribbean Self-Help Group. They all sought to establish links with the liberation movements in Africa, to provide material support and to create a platform to educate people about those struggles. The annual celebration of African Liberation Day reinforced the sense of connection towards the African continent.

Throughout the 1980s, ALD was used by activists to draw attention to local and national grievances, as well as concerns of African communities in the Americas, the Caribbean, Europe and Africa. The activities celebrated the rich and diverse cultures of Africa and its diaspora. But the focus was mainly political, and activists such as Kwame Ture (otherwise known as Stokely Carmichael) drew attention to the commonality of the experiences of people of African heritage, regarding ALD as a day of political education.¹¹⁶

From the mid-1980s Birmingham, with its large African-Caribbean population, became a prime location for ALD activities and often drew crowds of between 100 and 300 people from the Midlands area.¹¹⁷ In 1986, the year after the urban riots in London and Birmingham, the organisers of ALD emphasised the need for the black community to acquire political knowledge and education. The need for organisation and unity at home to meet the challenges that the black community faced was stressed along with appreciation of Africa, its cultures and solidarity with the struggles for political freedom in that continent.

The experience of racism that all people of African heritage suffered in one way or another was the common denominator through which activists sought to build feelings of solidarity. For the organisers of ALD,

wherever one turned black people experienced racial disadvantage. Blacks in Britain had therefore to stand:

In unity with our black Brothers and Sisters in South Africa/Azania to smash apartheid and get rid of colonialism [... in Britain we must] protest against racist immigration, education, and social policies and laws, and practices, as well as against high unemployment [...] against continued police and state brutality, harassment, and murder of our people.¹¹⁸

Afro-Caribbean activist groups

The Afro-Caribbean Self-Help Group spearheaded the organisation of ALD activities in Birmingham. The group was led by the charismatic activist Bini Brown, who was based in the Handsworth area of Birmingham in the heart of the black and Asian community. By 1986 the group had acquired a decade of experience in supporting the liberation struggle in southern Africa. The group raised money from within the local black community, and collected clothes and basic provisions for African families and freedom fighters in South Africa and the frontline states. All these supplies were sent to southern Africa.¹¹⁹ Furthermore, contact was made with PAC exiles in Britain and the group made donations to meet the needs of individuals struggling to survive financially. In the case of one PAC member in exile who needed medical treatment in London, it was the Afro-Caribbean Self-Help Group in Birmingham that helped with accommodation costs while he waited, and assistance continued during his period of convalescence. Afro-Caribbean Self-Help members visited this individual in hospital.¹²⁰ The Afro-Caribbean Self-Help Group in Birmingham channelled funds to the headquarters of PAC exiles in London and frequently requested PAC literature on southern African affairs to distribute among its members and the wider black community in the Midlands.¹²¹ This was replicated elsewhere; the Afro-Caribbean Group in Southsea was also keen to provide financial support. The PAC member Dipheko A. Chiloane, writing on behalf of Ngila Michael Muendane, PAC's chief representative for Britain and Europe, expressed gratitude for funds provided in 1979:

On behalf of the Pan Africanist Congress [...] be assured comrade that the £22 contribution your members contributed to the party is highly regarded and will no doubt contribute in feeding and clothing the hundreds of refugees who are under the care of the party in the Bakamoyo, Mbeya Ilola and Uphanga camps.¹²²

PAC's emphasis on African agency and self-determination in leading the liberation struggle without white involvement was a perspective shared by pan-Africanist groups such as the Afro-Caribbean Self-Help Group and those that organised ALD. These groups were more receptive to PAC's ideology of racial exclusivity than to the non-racial ideology of the ANC, which made room for the inclusion of all races in the struggle against apartheid. As discussed above, this fundamental principle was embodied in the ANC's Peoples Charter of 1955. During the 1960s, the newly independent African leaders did not understand the ANC policy of non-racialism or its willingness to include communists in the movement. Non-racialism was interpreted as an excuse for continued white domination. It seemed to be too similar to the multiracialism in Kenya and the multiracial partnership in the Central African Federation that Africans interpreted as the further entrenchment of white settler rule.¹²³ Furthermore, African leaders expressed doubts over whether black Africans were actually in control of the ANC because of the prominence of other racial groups. PAC was viewed as the more genuine expression of African nationalism.¹²⁴

The question was one of who would predominate and hold the ultimate power in controlling the riches and destiny of South Africa. The ANC's answer, according to the principles and aspirations stated in its charter, was that South Africa belonged to all the South African people; all ethnic groups should have an equal stake in the public life of the nation and its future destiny. However, PAC's answer to this was that only the original inhabitants and owners of the land, the African people, had the sole right to predominate and determine the future of the country. Even though the ANC's vision for a non-racial South Africa ultimately became the reality, a significant minority of Africans in South Africa did not share the ANC's non-racial perspective and PAC was the embodiment of this sentiment. Moreover, some black Britons shared this sentiment, and while the ANC was supported wholeheartedly by white progressives as well as some black supporters, PAC found more

sympathy and allies among black radical activists and pan-Africanists. They shared a suspicion and distrust of the motives of white progressives who benefitted from the status quo, whether they held racial prejudices or not. Moreover, sceptics argued that it was in the interest of self-preservation that white liberals supported a non-racial democratic solution for South Africa as represented by the ANC instead of PAC.¹²⁵ Therefore, PAC members visited black communities around Britain, canvassed for funds and sought to educate black activist groups about the history of their organisation and the nature of their struggle. In so doing, they found a willing audience among significant numbers of black activists who criticised the perceived dominance of whites in the anti-apartheid movement.¹²⁶ In a tour that took in the cities of Manchester and Nottingham, cities with significant black populations, a member of PAC in exile wrote to Bini Brown in 1976:

Concerning our proposed fund-raising tour [...] we kindly appeal to you brothers and sisters to co-operate and co-ordinate all your efforts with other organisations and progressive groups, so that we are exposed to a much larger audience and publicity to the people in the Midlands so that they can contribute to our struggle without reservations.¹²⁷

Although the precise amounts of monies raised remained unclear, the existence of this letter shows that from the mid-1970s some black British groups were in direct communication with PAC representatives and were being fed information on South Africa and the wider region from a PAC perspective. It is typical, for instance that Aniel Madire, the general secretary of the Afro-Caribbean Society based at Union House, St Paul's Road, Southsea, requested an article from PAC to include in a journal. The article, she said, would be placed next to other contributions from African and Caribbean embassies and organisations involved in African and Caribbean affairs:

We would be very grateful if you can write us an article on the role or your attitude towards Africa or the Caribbean [...] your country's attitude towards liberation movements in Africa especially South Africa, your country's economy [...] your views on US or USSR in Africa.¹²⁸

This letter demonstrates how, in some cases, black British activists took the initiative in requesting that PAC's representatives share their perspective on international affairs. Regular contributions of this kind raised the profile of PAC in the black community, and black groups seemed keen to raise funds on PAC's behalf. Another instance saw PAC informed that:

The group in Nottingham (Black People's Freedom Movement) will be having a meeting and would like to use this as a fund raising meeting for the PAC, they would like you to send a representative to this meeting which will be 2nd October [...]. Please find enclosed a cheque for the sum of £11.83 for the Newspaper.¹²⁹

This communication and fundraising continued into the 1980s.¹³⁰ In response to the PAC request to send 'ten tons of clothing for a particular area in the front',¹³¹ the Afro-Caribbean community in Birmingham sent clothes and essential provisions for families and freedom fighters in the camps in southern Africa:

We would like to thank you for acknowledging our small contribution to the struggle in the homelands of Azania. We would also like to draw to your attention the fact that there is a constant flow of clothes that are to be shipped to your organisation.¹³²

PAC also received aid of clothes and finance from an umbrella group calling itself the West Indian Organisation Co-ordinating Committee. This group was based in Manchester with patrons such as the high commissioners of Jamaica, Barbados, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, and Grenada, in conjunction with affiliated West Indian groups in Britain. In 1986, an invitation was extended to PAC to become involved in the planning of a day of commemoration of the Sharpeville and Soweto uprisings and to attend a protest calling for the British government to take a firmer line with the South African government. A representative from the committee stated:

We must organise ourselves in such a way as to make our presence felt by giving support and recognition to the struggle of our people

throughout the world, and at the same time demonstrating by the withdrawal of our labour for one-day throughout the UK.¹³³

However, there is no evidence that a labour strike by black British workers ever occurred in solidarity with African workers in South Africa. Furthermore an organisation calling itself the National Coordinating Committee for African Liberation (NCCAL) tried to initiate a strike but it never caught on.¹³⁴

Throughout the 1980s, PAC was approached by various pan-Africanist groups in Britain, especially the Birmingham-based Pan-African Congress Movement, one of the organisers of ALD events. During the late 1980s the group frequently requested speakers from PAC: 'In the spirit of African unity and co-operation which we seek to develop amongst our people.'¹³⁵ In 1989, PAC speakers participated in panel discussions at an ALD event held at Dulcie High School in Moss Side, Manchester. Linking domestic and international concerns, the following topics were under discussion:

Culture, education, mental health and the continual armed struggle for the liberation of South Africa (Azania). Workshops and seminars will address these pertinent issues affecting our people.¹³⁶

Participants also discussed domestic concerns such as the make-up of black family structures and strategies to support the 'African' family and members of the black community. The following year, PAC representatives attended the ALD event in Lozells, Birmingham. Under the banner 'New decade, a New African', discussions centred on foreign ideologies in Africa, the state of Africans in Britain and Europe, science and technology and the opportunities it offered for black communities.¹³⁷ There was a constant flow of correspondence between PAC and black community groups from the mid-1970s throughout the 1980s. Eschewing the non-racialism of the ANC, the organisers of ALD felt that PAC represented the authentic voice of the African struggle against white domination and repression in southern Africa. They effusively supported PAC's struggle for legitimacy in its rivalry with the ANC and its contribution to pan-Africanist events in Britain.¹³⁸

The ANC, however, was not totally sidelined by these groups. Although there may have been sympathy with PAC's emphasis on the importance of Africans determining the course of South Africa's future and reclamation of the land and its wealth, as time progressed, it was apparent that the ANC had majority support within South Africa and was more politically sophisticated and organised in its opposition to apartheid. Thomas argues:

The PAC's insurrectionary ideology accurately reflected black anger at white racism, [but ultimately its] 'anti-white chauvinism,' was described as 'self defeating'. Compared to the PAC, the ANC defended itself as a well organised and disciplined political organisation with a clear political programme and with cadres trained in underground conspiratorial work.¹³⁹

The ANC had gained legitimacy in the eyes of the black majority in South Africa and was the only fully representative alternative to previous racist forms of government. Black groups more ideologically disposed to PAC could not ignore the overwhelming support of the ANC among those seeking a new political dispensation in South Africa. Therefore, the Afro-Caribbean Self-Help Groups, co-organiser of the ALD, corresponded with the ANC office in London and requested information on Nelson Mandela. The need was for:

Information about the ANC such as the history of the ANC and the many struggles, the ANC have been involved in [...] also the background history of Nelson Mandela [...] this information will be used for a documentary, which is being made by Talking Blues, Radio Leicester. Talking Blues is a black programme [...] the presenter of Talking Blues might require an ANC representative to do a talk about the Movement, if so, we will let you know in due course.¹⁴⁰

Similarly, a pan-African organisation based in Hackney, east London, collected funds and gathered clothes and other provisions for exiled members of the ANC. The ANC's chief representative in Britain expressed gratitude:

The clothing and shoes will be of great use for our many comrades who have been forced into exile. Your gesture of solidarity with the ANC in its struggle against racism and brutal repression for a free, non-racial democratic South Africa is indeed welcome.¹⁴¹

Furthermore, ANC representatives visited the organisation and discussed the current situation in South Africa while distributing the most recent ANC publications. This was enthusiastically accepted.¹⁴² Caribbean societies based in Britain but whose remit was to support political groups in the Caribbean, such as the Maurice Bishop Patriotic Movement (UK) also approached the ANC office for speakers and information.¹⁴³ Some West Indian campaigning groups tried to cultivate mutual support and solidarity with exiled ANC members in London. Not wishing to become diverted from their own agenda but wishing to build solidarity networks ANC representatives did encourage cultural and political exchanges, and provided speakers and information to those who approached them.¹⁴⁴ Cordial relations with sections of the black press were also encouraged.¹⁴⁵

Conclusion

Although there were commonalities between WISC, BPM and the Afro-Caribbean Self-Help Groups in their determination to support efforts to eradicate apartheid, there were also differences between these groups in their approach towards the AAM, the ANC and PAC. The ideological outlook of these groups affected which exiled southern African liberation movements were given preference and the full benefit of their solidarity and support. For some black groups, ideological differences between southern African liberation groups did not register. Their objective was just to contribute towards apartheid's demise and support whichever group came before their agenda. Nevertheless, PAC and its brand of African nationalism enjoyed popularity among self-help groups based in the Midlands and elsewhere. This will be discussed in the next chapter. It tended to attract support from younger activists in these groups rather than from the more conservative WISC, whose members could easily have been their parents. PAC's popularity coincided with a brief period of revival for PAC from the mid-1970s, which may have provided inspiration for its international supporters.¹⁴⁶ The ANC had strong

support in London, aided by the work of the AAM. Its headquarters were well organised in comparison to PAC. However, the popularity of PAC within black communities outside London may have been more readily achieved than in the capital, which was very much the stronghold of the ANC's strong ally, the AAM. Furthermore, in contrast to PAC, which had increasing problems with leadership and its directional focus from the late 1970s, the ANC had succeeded in increasing its membership and raising its international profile through its diplomacy, as well as capitalising on the disturbances of 1976.¹⁴⁷ Through its representatives in London, the ANC sought by argument and diplomacy to convert to its side the political and business classes in Britain that provided succour to the regime in Pretoria. The ANC's external mission presented the ANC as the only alternative to the minority government in South Africa. It focused on building a consensus of international opprobrium against the apartheid state. It concentrated its energies on lobbying government departments, parliamentary figures and working alongside the AAM. Furthermore the ANC's relations with 'grass-roots' black activists were weak when compared to the PAC. The PAC's 'underdog' status in comparison to the ANC appealed more to the grass-roots activists who had more sympathy with the PAC's brand of African nationalism, and who felt alienated and resentful of the status quo.

PAC argued that it had remained faithful to the objectives of the African struggle. However, its organisational instability, factionalism and exclusivist brand of African nationalism meant it was unable to raise its level of influence or appeal to a wider audience. Nor could it seriously rival the ANC as a unifying political force to take charge of a new political dispensation in South Africa. In Britain, however, black activists and campaigners of all shades of opinion were agreed that apartheid as a system had to be brought to an end, and they were determined to galvanise their supporters and members of their community to support the families caught up in the system and combatants fighting against the apartheid state. Most black groups educated their communities and provided information about the situation in southern Africa. Representatives from the ANC and PAC were called upon, pickets and boycotts were organised, fundraising events and significant dates were used to reinforce the message that racism should be resisted wherever or in whatever form it appeared.

These black groups, created in reaction to the challenges that the black community faced in Britain, could not ignore the common denominator of racism in the fight against prejudice in Britain, southern Africa and elsewhere. Unlike the AAM, at least until the BEM was formed, these groups succeeded in attracting and gaining support from the black community because they were able to highlight the parallels with, and draw connections between, their own experiences of racial exclusion and racial domination in southern Africa. In acknowledging and, in some cases, fighting the community's own anti-racist battles – an action the AAM was not prepared or equipped to take – black activists could penetrate and connect with the concerns of the community. They understood that black Britons felt the insult of apartheid most keenly because of past and present manifestations of racism in Britain. Black activists recognised this sooner than the AAM, and were able to tap into the community's feelings of connectedness. This empathy could be transformed into acts of solidarity and material support. Black Britons viewed events in southern Africa with more than casual detachment: there was a willingness to identify with the liberation struggles, and feelings of solidarity turned into concrete action. ALD organisers, and activists and campaigners in WISC and BPM, were facilitators of this process of support. The next chapter will examine the anti-apartheid activity of radical black groups who also sought to galvanise the black community into standing in solidarity with southern Africans fighting to remove apartheid. They were more critical of the AAM and determined to take a lead in building an anti-apartheid consensus.

CHAPTER 6

BLACK RADICAL SOLIDARITY WITH THE ANTI-APARTHEID STRUGGLE, 1970–90

This chapter examines the anti-apartheid activity of black radical groups who resented the lead taken by white liberals in building up an anti-apartheid consensus in Britain. The tradition of black radicalism in reaction to white racism in Britain has as long a history as racial discrimination itself.¹ In comparison to the groups discussed in the previous chapter, these groups lay a greater stress on black empowerment and autonomy of leadership as part of their strategy of anti-racism. Their activity was structured towards redressing manifestations of white supremacy and the inaccuracies as they saw it of the negative stereotypes and Eurocentric interpretation of the place of black people in history, and contemporary world affairs. In the literature disseminated to those attending their events they emphasised the contribution of African people to world history and stated a determination to fight for black political, economic and social empowerment and liberation from white oppression wherever it was manifested. A mixture of black nationalist and pan-Africanist ideology lay at the centre of the activity of these groups, alongside a strong emphasis on the historical and contemporary injustice against Africans and Africans of the diaspora. The southern African liberation struggle came under scrutiny and engendered the activism and support of two groups that made support for the liberation struggle in southern Africa an integral part of their activism.

The activities of the All-African People's Revolutionary Party (A-APRP) and Black Action for the Liberation of South Africa (BALSA) symbolised the radical strand of black British solidarity with the southern African liberation struggle. The individuals who organised the activities of these groups and became members tended to range between the ages of 20 to their late 40s and held positions in public service such as council workers, trade unionists, transport workers, teachers and students. The ratio of men to women was more or less equal and London, with the greatest concentration of black citizens, was the prime base and area of activity for both groups.²

African-American influence

Both of these groups espoused a racially exclusivist ideology and political trajectory for African peoples struggling against white racism and imperialism. The emphasis on black self-reliance and black power among black radical groups in postwar Britain can be traced to the black radical activity of the late 1960s, and in particular the visit of Malcolm X to Britain. Malcolm X arrived in Britain on his second visit in February 1965 and, over the course of three days, met with local black leaders and with the Council of African Organisations in London.³ After the French government refused him entry into France, he returned to Britain for a debate at the London School of Economics, and visited Smethwick in Birmingham for a BBC Radio interview.⁴ His speech generated controversy when he compared the treatment of blacks in Smethwick to the treatment of Jews in Nazi Germany, and stated that he 'would not wait for the fascist element in Smethwick to erect gas ovens'.⁵ This caused outrage and anger among local white councillors, although the response of the local black community was not solicited. On Malcolm X's return to the United States, his evaluation of the state of black people in England and the rest of Europe was that they were divided by a lack of pride in common cultural roots. What was needed was 'someone to start the ball rolling'.⁶

Two years later that figure appeared in the person of Stokely Carmichael, in his role as head of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC).⁷ He brought into the public realm the slogan 'Black Power!' which argued for black autonomy and control in deciding the future of their communities and nations. In July 1967, his visit to a

conference in London on 'The Dialectics of Liberation' at the Round House in Camden marked the beginning of the Black Power Movement in Britain. During his speech Carmichael drew a distinction between acts of individual racism and what he termed a 'more subtle' form from established authorities. This form was potentially more destructive because it affected more people in fundamental ways.⁸ He also talked about 'cultural integrity' as a necessary goal and process by which a range of behaviours, information and self-images were evaluated in an effort to see the world through one's own perspective, one's own history and culture.⁹ His ideology merged the fight to eliminate capitalism with opposition to imperialism around the world. Noting that black communities were located in strategic positions in urban industrial centres, he stated 'a capitalist system automatically includes racism, whether by design or not [...] the struggles to free these internal colonies related to the struggles of imperialism around the world'.¹⁰ Moreover, in Carmichael's view, the struggle against racism was the most fundamental fight, taking precedence over the class struggle. This stood in contradiction to British Marxists who had always argued that the struggle against capitalism was the most fundamental. Referring to the experiences of blacks in America, but which had resonance for Africans worldwide, Carmichael informed his audience that:

It is necessary to understand that our analysis of this country [the United States] and international capitalism begins in race. Colour and culture were, and are, key in our oppression; therefore our analysis of history and our economic analysis are rooted in these concepts.¹¹

Furthermore, Carmichael argued that the struggle was not only against racism, because this led to the philosophy of integration as the solution, which was unacceptable in his view. Drawing from his experience of race in America he noted that, 'because of the integration movement's middle-class orientation, because of its subconscious racism, and because of its non-violence approach [...] it has never been able to involve the black proletariat'.¹² The struggle against racism was an international struggle, allied with the struggles of other progressive peoples; so the African liberation movements, the Vietnamese and the guerrillas of Latin America were all fighting essentially the same enemy. Carmichael noted that while the Western governments were concerned

with the 'violence' of armed struggles, the US black liberation movement had not yet moved to that stage; it was so far a purely political struggle. However:

The white West will make the decision on how they want the political war to be fought [...] with or without violence. Black Power means that black people see themselves as part of a new force, sometimes called the Third World; we see our struggles as closely related to liberation struggles around the world.¹³

Carmichael's speech was eagerly listened to and well received by his audience, as was his talk at Speakers' Corner in Hyde Park.¹⁴ While in London, he met with black power advocates in Britain, individuals such as Michael de Freitas, founder of the Black Power Movement in Britain, and Roy Sawh, a leading member of the movement.¹⁵ Even though some in the black community were critical of 'Black Power', Carmichael's articulation of the ideas behind the slogan had a profound impact on listeners. For the Nigerian novelist Obi Egbuna, a former member of the Council of African Organisations:

It was one of the best speeches [at Hyde Park] I have ever heard Stokely make, and his impact on the audience, both black and white, was electric. By the time he finished speaking, it had become evident that, if he was lucky enough to get away from Britain without being arrested, he was destined to be banned from coming back. A new phase of black history had begun.¹⁶

One historian argues:

The effect of Black Power in Britain was similar to its impact in the United States in that it legitimized a body of black political theory developed in earlier Pan African movements, the concepts of Marcus Garvey on racial integrity, and those more recent concepts of Malcolm X. But it also spawned a series of organisations and converted others to the new black religion of social change.¹⁷

After Carmichael's visit to Britain, representatives from the Black Panthers in America visited chapters set up in London and Birmingham.

The African-American influence continued during the late 1960s and early 1970s and Connie Matthews, a representative of the International Office of the Black Panthers in Algiers headed by Eldridge Cleaver, toured black communities in Britain.¹⁸ Matthews spoke to audiences in Handsworth, Birmingham and gave a talk in Clapham and Earls Court in London, where she drew crowds of 1,000 people. Intriguingly, there were reports in the media that the Special Branch of the British police, the American CIA, as well as the South African Intelligence Service estimated that the Black Power Movement's strength in numbers of supporters in the United Kingdom amounted to fewer than 100 members in Britain.¹⁹ This could have been a damage limitation exercise of placing this story in the press to minimise public alarm; certainly the evidence on which these authorities based their figures was never made transparent. However, support was significant enough that year when demonstrations were organised to protest against the imprisonment of Bobby Seale, the African-American chairman of the Black Panther Party in America. Hundreds of blacks and some whites marched before the US Embassy to demand his release.²⁰

Although the Black Panther Party in Britain never attained the publicity and notoriety of its counterpart in America, the ideology of black self-determination remained strong and black activist groups from this time drew inspiration from the Black Power Movement in America and participated in periodic demonstrations calling for black power. In 1970, three years after Carmichael's visit, a variety of black radical organisations emerged and these included the Racial Action Adjustment Society (RAAS), the Black People's Liberation Party, the Black Workers' League, the Black Unity and Freedom Party, as well as the Black Power Party. Especially notable were the publications that these groups produced, such as the *Black Voice* newspaper of the Black Unity and Freedom Party; *Race Today* of the 'Race Today Collective'; *Race*, which became *Race and Class* after a takeover coup led by radicals at the Institute of Race Relations in 1972; *Bradford Black*, an affiliate in north-east England of the 'Race Today Collective'; and later, in the 1970s, the newspaper *Grass Roots*, operating from a bookstore within the centre of Brixton's black community.²¹ These publications demonstrate how the ideologies of Black Power and pan-Africanism connected black communities of the diaspora. The Pan-African Movement as it related to the liberation struggles on the continent of Africa unified black radicals

and progressives in the Americas, the Caribbean, Europe, Africa and even in Australia.²² Reflecting a common theme, one radical publication editorialised that:

The system under which we as black people [...] live in Britain is the same system that exists from the U.S.A to Japan, with the exception of a few countries trying to build socialism. The struggles of black people living here, fighting for basic democratic aims are linked with the struggles of oppressed and exploited people the world over, because the system we're fighting is the same system – capitalism/imperialism, which has many faces. Whether it is the black people of the U.S.A fighting for basic democratic rights, or the peoples of the West Indies and African or Asian states [...] or against the white settler rulers, the fight is the same – it is an international one.²³

These parallels were acknowledged when figures such as Malcolm X, Stokely Carmichael, James Baldwin, Dick Gregory and Dr Martin Luther King visited black communities in Britain and elsewhere during the 1960s and 1970s. These visits had an impact upon the growth of black radicalism on British soil. The visits may not have signalled a watershed in race relations or spurred the government to change course and re-examine its approach to race legislation, yet these exchanges, according to one historian, 'influenced the course and character of the black response to the control agents of British Society by stimulating the use of political tactics to oppose racism'.²⁴ Inspiration was gained through contact with African-Americans who spoke out of their experience of racism in America and who drew parallels with the struggles of black people in Britain.²⁵ These visits paved the way for the development of an ideology of resistance to British racism. Rather than being powerless in the face of racial prejudice, the black community was conceptualised as a source of power through which strategies could be used to confront the agents of the status quo.²⁶ Therefore the police, local government councils, social services, private landlords, and so-called white liberal race experts had to be challenged by black unified resistance when it was felt they overstepped the mark in how they related to black communities.²⁷

Although reactions were largely spontaneous, the strategies of confrontation were dramatically displayed to the public when violence

erupted on the streets of London, Liverpool and Birmingham during the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s, as referred to in the previous chapter. It can be argued that unlike previous generations who protested within the law, this then became part of a protest strategy by which members of the black community broke through their socialised containment and secured the attention of local and national authorities with a violent expression of grievances against the white establishment. One historian argues that implicit in these violent reactions was a strategy of retaliation for both the material deprivation of the black population and the psychological effects of racist harassment, intimidation, rejection, and negation of the black population by the white population or their agents: the government, the police, the race industry bureaucracy and other institutions such as schools.²⁸

The All-African People's Revolutionary Party

One black British group that subscribed to the pan-Africanism championed by Carmichael and who also participated in the activities surrounding African Liberation Day was the All-African People's Revolutionary Party (A-APRP). The inspiration for its original formation was the pan-Africanist leader of newly independent Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah. The A-APRP was formed in 1968 after Nkrumah's call for an All-African People's Revolutionary Party to bring a new spirit of unity to the independent nations of Africa. The first meeting took place in Conakry, Guinea, in that year, and chapters were soon organised in other African countries as well as the United States, Canada, the Caribbean, Britain, France and West Germany.²⁹ There is little evidence of the activities of the A-APRP over the next 20 years; but by the 1980s we can begin to trace the activities and spread of the influence of the A-APRP in Britain through the correspondence between branches in Washington DC and London. The ideology of the group was based on a mixture of the writings of Nkrumah and Ahmed Sékou Touré, both of whom championed pan-Africanism.³⁰ In the group's literature, which it distributed to members of the black community, it defined pan-Africanism as, 'the total liberation and unification of Africa under scientific socialism'.³¹ There is, however, no clear explanation of what 'scientific socialism' was exactly, or how this would be brought about, particularly in such a politically, linguistically and culturally diverse continent as Africa.

The A-APRP's chapter in London received guidance and support from the US branch and shared its perspective on the worldwide discrimination against African peoples and the ways of challenging perceived racial injustices. There were frequent exchanges of letters between the A-APRP in Washington, DC and London. The Washington chapter's proposals to bring about change were more ambitious, and urged the eradication of the FBI and CIA through building a revolutionary coalition.³²

One suspects that its activities may have brought the group to the attention of US government intelligence.³³ Currently there is no evidence that the A-APRP branch in London followed the lead of its US counterpart and involved itself in forming alliances with anti-establishment and paramilitary operatives in Britain, such as the Irish Republican Army (IRA). However, during the 1980s, the A-APRP in London organised a series of All-African Students' Conferences (A-ASC) in conjunction with the international Black Students' Union. These were held at North London Polytechnic. Representatives from the southern African liberation movements were often invited to speak, and during the third A-ASC the central theme was the struggle for the liberation of southern Africa. A speaker was invited to represent PAC. In prior correspondence PAC exiles in London were informed that the A-APRP:

Looked forward [...] to working with you to politically educate African and other freedom loving people about the heroic struggle being waged in southern Africa, and the historic necessity to work for Pan-Africanism and world socialism.³⁴

The topic under panel discussion was entitled 'Pretoria as an agent of European Imperialism'. However, there remains no record as to the exact number of attendees or their identities. Despite the lack of details regarding the A-APRP's finances, the correspondence shows that the A-APRP paid for the travel expenses of speakers and provided overnight accommodation when necessary.³⁵ These conferences exposed students and activists mainly from the black community to A-APRP ideas and provided the A-APRP members with an opportunity to promote its pan-Africanist ideology.

In London, A-APRP membership never reached more than 40, although members leafleted communities, and representatives spoke to

small political gatherings of other black activist groups.³⁶ The group collaborated with other black activist groups and, in 1988, A-APRP organised African Liberation Day jointly with the Africa Liberation Committee, an affiliated member of Balsa. On this occasion, a speaker from PAC was the keynote.³⁷ The tendency to invite more PAC than ANC speakers to these events betrays the greater level of sympathy that existed within these circles for PAC's conduct of the liberation struggle, in particular its continued emphasis on the historical injustice of land dispossession as well as its reductive characterisation of whites as nothing more than settlers and unwelcome aliens on South African land. From its inception PAC's political message was uncompromising as well as anti-communist. Its critique of the influence of the white Congress of Democrats and the Communist Party on the ANC was in line with the sentiments of the new leaders of independent Africa.³⁸

The progressive states that formed the Casablanca group, members of the Organisation of African Unity, and radicals in the black diaspora were especially suspicious of the role of whites in the African liberation struggle.³⁹ This resonated with black radicals in the diaspora. The stress by PAC on the need for racial solidarity and unity validated the similar beliefs of black radicals in the diaspora who viewed white people as their oppressors, sustained by a European-centred power structure. Sympathy with PAC's ideological outlook continued to have an impact on activist groups such as the A-APRP.

It has been argued that during the 1980s PAC was largely a moribund organisation, due to leadership conflict, incompetence, detention of its members in Tanzania and a haemorrhaging of its membership.⁴⁰ Nevertheless, as the previous chapter has shown, PAC representatives in exile in Britain continued to engage with black groups in London and Birmingham and to receive financial and material support when presented with the opportunity. Moreover, it was PAC's ideology of an uncompromising African struggle for political power that appealed to groups such as the A-APRP rather than the unstable *modus operandi* of the broader PAC liberation movement.

During the 1980s, the All-African Students' Conference was an annual event where these themes were debated and discussed. In its sixth year in 1989, the planning of the event was a cooperative venture between the A-APRP and the Afro-Caribbean Society of the University of London, and the event was held at the London School of Economics.

There were representatives from PAC, the Black Consciousness Movement of Azania, the ANC, and SWAPO alongside representatives from the Palestine, Ireland and Eritrean people's liberation fronts. Invitations to the event encouraged students in the following terms: 'African students – organise! For one unified socialist Africa; the African is marching forward to freedom and no power on earth can halt her now.'⁴¹

In literature distributed to participants, the A-APRP also promoted African Liberation Day as an instrument of national emancipation and redemption:

The African revolution, the Pan-African movement, and African Liberation Day stand in uncompromising support of all just struggles – in Ireland, occupied Palestine, the Philippines and the South Pacific, the Western Hemisphere, and throughout the world.⁴²

Members of the A-APRP asserted that all people of African descent were Africans. There was no division between Africans and Africans of the diaspora estranged from the continent through slavery. Africa was upheld as the authentic homeland of the 'Black man'. Through establishing pan-African networks and seeking to establish chapters 'wherever African people live, suffer and struggle',⁴³ the organisation sought:

The total liberation and unification of Africa under scientific socialism [...] membership in the A-APRP is open to all Africans who understand and accept its objectives, accept its ideology, and who agree to politically educate and organise the masses of African people worldwide by studying and working to build the A-APRP.⁴⁴

The following year, on 27 May 1990, an ALD conference organised by the A-APRP was held at Lambeth Town Hall in south London. A march followed by a rally took place on Clapham Common and attracted over 100 people.⁴⁵ A representative of the A-APRP, writing to PAC, stated that the group wished:

to extend to you our heartfelt thanks for your support and assistance which helped to make both days [...] in London a

success [...] Africa Liberation Day reflected the progress and problems we have made and inherited in the struggle for Pan-Africanism since its modern organised expression was launched at the first Pan-African conference in London 1900 [...] such a successful event is the result of ongoing political education, work, organisation, and struggle.⁴⁶

Unfortunately, gaps exist in the records that chronicle the activities of the A-APRP. However, there are important points to make when assessing the impact and significance of the conferences that the group organised or in which members participated. The fact that these panel discussions and commemorative days were held and attended in sufficient numbers to be repeated annually for nearly a decade, demonstrates that there was a significant level of black interest, organisation and discussion over southern Africa and other areas of anti-racist struggle. Furthermore, transnational comparisons were constantly made and experiences shared, which no doubt encouraged and strengthened the resolve of the participants to continue with their consciousness-raising activities. Moreover, considering the common practice among these groups to emphasise black solidarity, economic empowerment and self-sufficiency, it is doubtful that the representatives from various liberation groups who spoke at these events would have left empty-handed. Arrangements for financial and material aid in contribution to their struggles were certainly made.⁴⁷ Clearly, for a significant number of politically conscious black Britons, political activism was not limited to local and national concerns; there was a consistent interest in struggles elsewhere, fed as it was by Africanist-centred groups such as A-APRP.

While the activism of the AAM had the single-focus objective of seeking fully representative democracy in southern Africa, the black radical perspective tended to view the African struggle through a pan-African-centred prism. They saw anti-racist struggles, whether domestic or global, as interrelated. Black communities were seen as being in direct conflict with various manifestations of a white power structure, which they needed to be politically conscious of and galvanised to oppose. At first glance, the anti-apartheid activity and the radicalisation of the black community by groups such as A-APRP may seem negligible when compared to the higher profile of the AAM campaigns that sought to

involve all sections of the population. However, the A-APRP performed a useful consciousness-raising role within the black community that the mostly white AAM struggled to achieve. Furthermore, the creation of a sense of solidarity that was ably articulated by activist groups such as A-APRP, especially through conferences and community-focused cultural events, should not be undervalued. Connections were made, opportunities were created for exiles to promote the justice of their cause to significant numbers of the black community, and an atmosphere of solidarity was built up, which often led to financial and material aid for liberation groups. These contacts created networks of support for exiled groups who were often viewed as political subversives by the British Conservative establishment that backed the white minority government in South Africa. The A-APRP gave the representatives of the liberation movement exposure to the black community, which they may not have otherwise had.

Despite this, one reality was that numbers count in regard to building a consensus for political change whether on the domestic front or internationally. The A-APRP's determined concentration in seeking to inform and galvanise only among the black community meant that it was only evangelising within a small section of the population. During the 1980s, particularly after the urban disturbances, the expansion of equal opportunity legislation and the courting of various ethnic groups by the mainstream political parties meant that the political and cultural shift at the time was to move away from social and political exclusion of particular groups, on the surface at least, to an all-inclusive multiculturalism and anti-racist cooperation.⁴⁸ Therefore, black activists such as the A-APRP who sought to oppose political injustice and racism at home and abroad without broad-based support among all sections of the population were at a disadvantage in seeking to challenge the power structure and government policy makers. The great anti-racist movements in history such as the anti-slavery movement and other social and political movements in Britain had succeeded precisely because they captured the imagination and support of a wide cross-section of the population, even those not directly affected by the plight of the oppressed. Consciences were pricked and large sections of the population were spurred into action to insist on change to remove systems of inequality. However, black activists who belonged to groups such as A-APRP quite deliberately did not collaborate or form

alliances with white anti-racists. They believed that blacks should play the dominant role in achieving their own political and economic freedom through black unity, which did not include building alliances with whites.⁴⁹

Black Action for the Liberation of South Africa

Another group determined to build support among black communities to stand in solidarity with the liberation movement in southern Africa was the group that called itself Black Action for the Liberation of Southern Africa (BALSA). BALSA was formed by a group of Black Labour Party activists who supported the demand to establish 'Black Sections' in the Labour Party.⁵⁰ The call for Black Sections among black Labour Party activists emanated from their realisation of the significance of black votes, particularly in areas of a high concentration of black and Asian residents. Black members active in the Labour Party began to argue for greater representation in return for the electoral support of their communities. For supporters of Labour Party Black Sections (LPBS), the rationale for its existence was the fact that although black people had voted solidly for the Labour Party for decades, this was not reflected in party policy, its priorities or within the Labour Party's structures. It was thought that LPBS would involve more black people in Labour politics and challenge the party's record of neglect of black community concerns as well as providing the party with the increased electoral support it needed.⁵¹

The urban disturbances of the 1980s provided black activists with greater political leverage in their arguments, while the rise of the Labour Left in local government, particularly in London, created the opportunity to place the issue of black representation on the political agenda. In 1983 black Labour Party members seized the moment and established an unofficial national Labour Party Black Section. This was bitterly opposed by the Labour Party leadership. Neil Kinnock (a staunch supporter of the AAM) and Roy Hattersley, in particular, saw this as a form of political apartheid and potentially divisive and damaging, especially for Labour's appeal to white working-class voters. However, the LPBS argued that there were specialised internal groups for women and other ethnic groups within the party's structure and that they saw the leadership's opposition as a form of internal racism and an attempt to

suppress black political aspirations. Against this background of political infighting and increasing black radicalism, black Labour activists formed BALSAs with the support of other black radical groups.

BALSA became an umbrella body with affiliated members drawn from a range of pan-Africanist political, social and welfare interest groups.⁵² Perhaps confirming the Labour Party's suspicions of the 'separatist' and potentially disruptive nature of those clamouring for Black Sections within the party, BALSAs stated: 'We are our own liberators.'⁵³ Presumably the 'we' meant black activists only, as criticism of the interference of 'white liberals' began to emerge. For these activists, BALSAs would be an organisation of black people for black people in Britain, and the group stated its intention 'to pool together our resources and to contribute to the liberation struggle of the people of Southern Africa'.⁵⁴ At its official launch on 22 August 1986, it was the Ghana People's Solidarity Organisation (GHAPSO), an affiliated member, which provided this founding statement. Based in Camden, north London, GHAPSO had called on all black organisations in Camden to come together as a united force in solidarity with the liberation struggle in southern Africa. The attitude of members towards the AAM was made clear when it was stated:

There is much controversy over the Anti-Apartheid Movement among activists. Problems arise because it is seen as a white, middle-class liberal organisation. The more aware activists are concerned about its exclusive support for the ANC – though the AAM deny this is true. More disturbing is the AAM's image as a white dominated movement that refuses to take up issues of racism in Britain and thereby make itself relevant to domestic black struggle.⁵⁵

This criticism of the AAM and its refusal to take up black domestic concerns would occur repeatedly from activists in the black community. It points to a perennial weakness in the movement's attempts to appeal to the black community. Its failure to adopt the domestic struggles of black communities in turn alienated the movement from a potential reservoir of black support. Harboursing resentment against the leadership of the AAM, members of BALSAs rather ambitiously sought to usurp the territory that the AAM had

gained over nearly a 30-year period, which was based on a wide range of support from a cross-section of the population and political establishment. In a bitter diatribe BALSA stated:

Our role should be to regain black leadership of an issue which belongs to us and has been hijacked [...] the priorities and agenda are currently decided by influential white race 'spokesmen' like the AAM chair, Bob Hughes MP. White liberals have a strangle-hold on the issue.⁵⁶

The belief that the AAM acted as a barrier between domestic black groups and visiting ANC members or southern African exiles never went away. BALSA's reference to support of the armed struggle clearly placed it at odds with the AAM, where support for the armed struggle remained controversial. BALSA emphasised racial exclusivity in the fight against apartheid and called on 'Black peoples everywhere and in particular those in Britain to join forces to aid the struggle against national oppression, racism and exploitation in Southern Africa.'⁵⁷

BALSA's pan-Africanist perspective of the struggle in southern Africa and the links with the black diaspora can be seen in its opening declaration. It argued that the struggle of Africans against the forces of political oppression in southern Africa was part of the struggle against racialism, colonialism and neo-colonialism, and imperialism around the globe by people of colour. Furthermore, 'we regard the black people of South Africa/Azania and Namibia as flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone [...] our solidarity is based on the historical ties of a people sharing a common heritage and destiny of black liberation.'⁵⁸ Pointing to Western governments' collaboration with Pretoria it stated:

The racist settler colonialist regime, with the active support and connivance of western economic interests and ruling classes, has tightened up its internal repression, stepped up its economic and military attacks on the Frontline States and is hardening its illegal occupation of Namibia [...] we black people in Britain must now grasp this historic challenge before us and throw our full weight behind the struggle of our brothers and sisters in Southern Africa.⁵⁹

Furthermore, with implications of a global white conspiracy against blacks, it was argued that those who benefited from the oppression of Africans in South Africa and the occupation of Namibia were the same people who profited from racism in Britain. In short, the struggle of Africans in the southern tip of the African continent for self-determination, national liberation, democracy and in defence of the sovereignty of the frontline states was part of a wider global struggle of blacks against racial oppression. Balsa's characterisation of the political struggle in southern Africa stretched beyond the struggle against the apartheid state. The struggle was only the latest manifestation of the African struggle against European imperialism, which demanded black unity and support to overcome the onslaught and for the recovery of their lost heritage, history, culture, country and land. It was a fight against total material and spiritual dispossession. Therefore, the struggle was on a qualitatively different level from being merely an anti-apartheid struggle:

The struggle of the black people of Azania summarises the nature of the historical oppression of Africa and the black diaspora based as it is on colonialism, racism and imperialism. For this reason the ongoing struggle has not only a global impact, but its resolution also has a particular significance for Pan Africanism. All the contradictions found in the Azanian struggle are found in the struggles of black people elsewhere.⁶⁰

In fact, unlike the AAM which supported the ANC's struggle to remove the apartheid government and replace it with a more representative democracy, Balsa sought more fundamental changes within Africa. Echoing Nkrumah's sentiments, on the heading of all their correspondence was a statement that declared:

The total liberation and unification of Africa under an All-African Socialist Government must be the primary objective of all black revolutionaries throughout the world. It is an objective which, when achieved, will bring about the fulfilment of the aspirations of Africans and people of African descent everywhere. It will at the same time advance the triumph of the international and socialist revolution.⁶¹

This viewpoint did not seem to account for the complicated and diverse nature of contemporary African states, many of which did not welcome any form of socialism to their territories and depended on Western aid for solvency. Balsa presented itself through its literature as providing a platform for the liberation movement to inform blacks in Britain about their struggle. In its leaflets, Balsa continued to urge members of the black community to provide greater support for the liberation struggle in southern Africa by contributing moral and material aid to the frontline states and calling for full economic sanctions and disinvestment in order to 'Bring Pretoria to its knees.'⁶² It also called on its members to organise boycotts of all South African goods, raise material support for the armed struggle and called for the unconditional release of the regime's political prisoners.⁶³

'The Black Agenda'

Members of Balsa who were simultaneously involved in agitating for the recognition of Black Sections within the parliamentary Labour Party contributed to a document called 'The Black Agenda'. This was presented by Black Section advocates as a document that sought to articulate and address the concerns of the black community in Britain. In a detailed section on South Africa, also referred to as 'Azania', they set forth their ideas regarding the role of domestic black support for the struggle of Africans in southern Africa.⁶⁴ They declared:

The Black Section position on this vital question is bound to be different from that of other solidarity groups in Britain like the AAM because, as part of the black diaspora we identify directly with the Azanian struggle. We see our struggle in Britain as being similar in content to that of African and Asian people worldwide. [...] The struggle of black youth in the South African townships has inspired black youth in Britain from St Pauls, Handsworth and Leicester to Brixton, Tottenham and Southall. We are ever conscious of the fact that British imperialism is the major Western capitalist exploiter in South Africa.⁶⁵

Taking a swipe at black activists prepared to work with white allies, and who were therefore 'Steeped in the politics of white colonising Leftism',⁶⁶ they argued that fighting racism in Britain, which the

document calls 'the National Question', should not be linked to debates about eradicating class divisions; it was an issue that had to be addressed uniquely. Moreover, regarding South Africa's future:

The current tactic of imperialism is to attempt to con us into believing that by getting rid of racialism and apartheid the black masses in Azania will be freed. The reality is that capitalism would remain with a 'multi-racial' face instead of an exclusively white one.⁶⁷

In its vision of the future, the chances of reconciliation between African and European seem impossible. Furthermore, by selectively quoting Malcolm X's criticism that white liberals who oppose armed struggle for black liberation are not allies in the struggle, it was argued that:

Many white people, despite their progressiveness, have not been able to fully shed their colonial and racial attitudes towards the struggle, and in particular to have a correct attitude towards the national question. While supporting the democratic struggles of black people they still peddle ideas about 'integration,' 'non-racial democracy,' 'multi-racialism' – all of them disguised forms of neo-colonialism.⁶⁸

This perspective clearly left no room for the reconciliation that the leadership of the ANC encouraged in order to keep South Africa from a bitter ethnically driven civil war. It clearly stood at odds with the ANC's racially inclusive vision that rejected the system of apartheid entrenched by successive white minority governments and supported by white South Africans. The ANC leadership acknowledged the role that all whites could play in a future South Africa if they were prepared to live in a fully democratic state that protected equally the rights of all regardless of race or ethnicity. Instead the tone and sentiment of this part of the 'Black Agenda' were more in keeping with PAC, which saw whites as irredeemably the enemy of the future well-being of Africans and whose role should be negligible in any future political dispensation. Acknowledging the ideological divisions that existed between the liberation groups, a member of Balsa explained to readers:

One of the chief problems is that black people in Britain have been led to believe that there is just one black liberation group fighting to emancipate Azania [...] the AAM's line has also, in a neo-colonialist way, suppressed the historical role played by the PAC and other groups in the Black Consciousness Movement which Steve Biko helped to form [...] nonetheless it must be stated that the ANC is the oldest black liberation movement in Azania ... we call for the release of the ANC's Nelson Mandela we should also demand that Zephania Mothopeng, of the PAC, be set free.⁶⁹

However, the authors of the 'Black Agenda' document were prepared to recognise the potential contribution of other races. The document states:

While the African people are the pivot of the new nation their main allies are the so-called 'Coloured' and Indian peoples. They form the black political bloc with the African peoples, taking the 'Africanist' aspirations as their own. The Indian people have always fought side by side with the Africa peoples. Indeed, Indian workers have played a key role in the formation of black liberation organisations and trade unions.⁷⁰

Little remains amongst the papers of the group to indicate whether members of the ANC or PAC discussed or responded in any way to the 'Black Agenda' document. However, former members claim that PAC representatives approved of the sentiments expressed in the Black Agenda.⁷¹ The Black Agenda is a remarkable document that articulates the extent of separatist thinking among black activists. It provides an alternative view of race relations in Britain, a viewpoint that was overlooked by mainstream commentators in the press. Black commentators of whatever political opinion were rarely allowed to present an erudite perspective in the national press. During their activities, members of Balsa came into contact with southern African exiles, and in leaflets distributed to the public it proudly boasted that, 'Black Section national officers have met with representatives of the ANC, PAC, AZAPO and BCM. We will continue this policy in the solidarity group Balsa.'⁷² Unfortunately, detailed records of these meetings and the issues discussed have not been preserved.

BALSA's failure to take the lead in anti-apartheid activism

The AAM's formation of the BEM Committee, which was the initiative of black members of the AAM rather than an innovation by the predominantly white members of the executive, was viewed with suspicion by the members of BALSA. Repeating the familiar argument, it charged the AAM with:

Refusing to take up issues of racism in Britain and thereby make itself relevant to domestic black struggle [...] the AAM's leadership has responded by changing the rules of their conference to secure their own positions and formed a 'Black and Ethnic Minorities' working party as a sop. Our role should be to regain black leadership of an issue which belongs to us and has been hijacked.⁷³

In contrast, BALSA saw its own formation as:

A truly significant event in the context of black politics in Britain [...] it] has sent shivers down the spines of those black and white liberals that sought to blunt the edge of revolutionary struggle in Southern Africa. In short, BALSA is here to stay as a political force.⁷⁴

However, it was not long before this hyperbole gave way to the fact that BALSA was failing to match up to the activism of the AAM. Internally the question was raised: 'Why then [...] has BALSA failed to consolidate its work and reach further into the black communities?'⁷⁵ A former member of BALSA who grew dissatisfied with the group at this point and joined the AAM, becoming a key member of its BEM, described the reasons she transferred her allegiance:

Initially I felt happy there [...] I left because I felt it was ineffectual and going no-where. It felt shambolic to me and it seemed unproductive where nothing happened except chat [they] were pretty anti the Anti-Apartheid Movement in its whiteness [...] there was discussion about doing things but nothing concrete that I could see [...] I left and joined the AAM which I had

hitherto abhorred because it was white but I thought at least something was happening with them.⁷⁶

Internally, the members noted that a lack of a defined strategy and plan of action was the most significant cause in BALSAs failure to 'embed' itself deep into the black community; there was a need to 'pump in blood and life into the organisation, to prevent it from becoming rigid and incestuous'.⁷⁷ It was proposed that the way forward was to have members concentrate more energy on the political, organisational, financial and cultural strategy of BALSAs.⁷⁸ Therefore it was decided that monthly political education meetings would focus on various topics such as the history of the liberation movements, multinationals and the role of transnationals in South Africa. Information fact sheets about events in southern Africa were distributed and members planned to hold commemorative events to mark significant dates in the African's history of struggle in South Africa. The 20 members in attendance agreed to be present:

Whenever it was thought necessary and timely [to] make our presence felt at demonstrations, marches, particularly those affecting, the lives of black peoples [...] and to set up meetings with target groups [such as] women, churches, health workers, youth, sports people.⁷⁹

However, the extent and impact of the members' engagement in anti-apartheid demonstrations or other activity remains hard to assess, apart from the information provided by former members. Currently there remains little by way of internal reports of the group's successes or failures regarding campaigns embarked upon. In its papers there are pledges to contact the frontline states, their embassies or representatives in the United Kingdom, but if this occurred there is no record of the outcome. The principle of black self-reliance was attempted in BALSAs financial dealings. Banking with high street banks was spurned in favour of attempting to find a 'suitable African bank'.⁸⁰ Finding one seems to have been problematic as three months later it is recorded: 'As yet there is no bank account.'⁸¹ At the time there existed independent Nigerian and Ghanaian banks in London, but these seem not to have been approached. After this point, the state of BALSAs finances is no longer disclosed.

Despite recording that 'a number of applications for membership have been received as well as postal donations',⁸² one gets the sense that money was constantly an issue due to the failure of affiliated groups to pay membership fees. It was acknowledged that, 'only 5 out of 16 organisations have paid dues to date [...] new members should be asked to pay in one month. Members who do not pay should be allowed observer status only.'⁸³ The AAM, a far more tightly organised, functional and higher-profile movement, struggled periodically to stay financially solvent; even more so did a parochial group like Balsa.

More than anything else, the internal organisation of Balsa seemed unnecessarily cumbersome. Its lofty constitution, its extensive structure of committees and planned meetings (in the form of AGMs, EGMs, NEC, NCC, NO, BEC), the raft of conventions governing interaction between these committees, the delegations, branches and the voting rules for membership were overbearing. One is struck by the sheer bureaucracy of the group and cannot help but wonder how anything was ever accomplished. Decision making was also time-consuming as matters followed through the processes of each committee.⁸⁴

At the beginning of the 1990s, when Balsa was struggling to retain its members, it was recognised that, 'the structure within Balsa created a problem and that they were unduly bureaucratic'.⁸⁵ Although the number of affiliated groups and committees suggest a significant number of members, in fact it seems that active members who attended monthly meetings numbered 20–25 people.⁸⁶ These meetings took place in a committee room in Lambeth Town Hall; this was due to the fact that one of the key members was a Lambeth councillor who had access to the committee rooms. Ambitiously, the group had plans for branches to be spread around the country: 'Though this has begun on one level it has not been undertaken [...] as a priority.'⁸⁷ It was therefore agreed that Manchester (which already had a Balsa office), Leeds, Liverpool, Nottingham, Birmingham, Bristol, Glasgow, Cardiff and Leicester should be targeted to galvanise the local black communities.⁸⁸ However, due to the lack of active membership on the ground it seems that regional branches did not become a reality.

The achievements of Balsa are therefore hard to quantify; the group certainly did not realise its ambitions to replace the AAM and take the lead in building and leading the consensus against the apartheid government. One cannot measure the impact of the circulation of its

literature into black community areas, as distribution details and figures of its publications have not been preserved, if they ever were recorded.⁸⁹ However, frequent fundraising events were held in the form of dances and dinners. For example, on 28 February 1987, the Third World Centre in London was hired for such an occasion.⁹⁰ The group also put together a library of books and pan-Africanist-themed literature with the aim of educating the black community about international relations in southern Africa, and publicity packs were produced.⁹¹ Precisely who used the library and how many packs were disseminated is again open to conjecture. Nevertheless, these were clear attempts to educate the black community regarding the affairs of southern Africa through encouraging household boycotts, leafleting, participation in conferences and demonstrations. In 1987, members of Balsa organised a 'Soweto Commemoration' day of discussion and workshops. The main theme was the origin of black consciousness and its current manifestations in South Africa. The significance of 16 June 1976 was discussed as a turning point for the African struggle, and political poetry was read between panel discussions. There was a strong PAC bias as speakers were mainly represented from this group, although ANC representatives were present. The day ended with musical entertainment, including the Balsa choir put together for the occasion, and food and dance.⁹²

In the same year, a Mozambique campaign was launched on 28 May at the Africa Centre in London. Exiles from Mozambique were present and were the main speakers. Through this campaign Balsa aimed to, 'raise funds and resources, and to focus on educational and health establishments in Mozambique which have been damaged, in order to rehabilitate them'.⁹³ The accompanying displays, posters, literature and information about Mozambique were targeted at an invited audience of southern African exiles and black social-welfare groups. Therefore, members from various black churches, businesses, the media, and health workers all attended. At the same event, members of Balsa arranged a press conference to record the handover of the sum of £3,000 from its fundraising around its Mozambique campaign.⁹⁴ Members had also collected clothing for refugees, and once the clothes arrived in southern Africa they were distributed by the Association of Women's Clubs, based in Zimbabwe.⁹⁵ Gathering this material aid was much helped by the fact that a Balsa member had knowledge of black councillors in London

from whom support could be gained from their network of associates and black communities throughout the city.

BALSA members were also active contributors and participants during the annual ALD celebrations. They often staffed an information stall during ALD activities and set up a stall and distributed information during the Notting Hill Carnival weekend in west London. Both events provided an opportunity to inform and raise its profile among the black community. In late 1987, speakers were also provided for the All-African Students' Conference, and a stall was staffed for all three days at the Africa Centre during a conference entitled 'Struggle for Freedom and Development'.⁹⁶

At this time it is recorded that similar pan-Africanist groups in Sweden and Australia contacted BALSA to express solidarity and exchange information.⁹⁷

However, by the late 1980s, although BALSA members had a high profile at selected cultural events and pan-Africanist-themed conferences where members of the black community congregated, these efforts did not help to increase substantially the levels of attendance at its monthly meetings. The group noted that there remained a 'lack of long term organisational planning and consequently an inability to be responsive when necessary [...] some members were not pulling their weight and fulfilling their responsibilities, no membership expansion'.⁹⁸ Also it was noted that the organisation of commemorative events was not always conducive to attracting large numbers or new membership. Why this was so is not made clear. However, it was stated:

In order to address our aim to be 'broad based' we should begin to target audiences more strategically [...] we must develop internal procedures to facilitate response to events such as the miners strike, torturing of children, the Sharpeville six and increase the political energy of BALSA.⁹⁹

In trying to keep up with the rapid pace of affairs in southern Africa, particularly in the two years before Mandela's release, the group struggled to respond in a way that attracted the support of potential new members. In its own words, events in South Africa:

Almost took us by surprise at the last minute and under the pressure of time and resources we organized a particular kind of

meeting which on the whole attracted the converted [...] if our main objective is to mobilise support for the liberation struggle in Southern Africa, we have to raise people's political consciousness and interest in the area in the hope of recruiting more members and therefore adding force and strength to our activities, campaigns etc, to do this we need an agenda/plan of action either up to national conference or beyond it.¹⁰⁰

The situation did not improve and the number of meetings during the year continued to fall. In 1989, attempts were made to organise meetings to discuss Balsa's revival but there seemed to be little improvement. During the end of the following year, a last-ditch effort was expended in notifying members about a planning meeting on the future of Balsa. With 45 invitations mailed out, at the last recorded meeting on 24 February 1991, only eight people were present, including the chair.¹⁰¹ Two of the eight present stated that they were unable to continue as members because they felt that:

Political circumstances giving rise to the need for Balsa had altered [and the] reality is that the commitment of people to support Balsa was not present even amongst its members and no organisation can exist without the basic good will.¹⁰²

The so-called 'good will' within the group had dissipated, but it is not made explicit as to why this had occurred. At this point it was acknowledged that: 'The probable conclusion to draw from the absence of contact for several months is that Balsa's affairs are effectively at an end.'¹⁰³ A brave face was put on this state of affairs and it was recorded by those present that Balsa had made: '[a] unique contribution as an anti-imperialist solidarity organisation that was broad based in its composition and political platform [...] Balsa from this point of view was linked to historical circumstances that had been transformed and thus its demise flowed from this.'¹⁰⁴

Ultimately, the political changes in South Africa had removed the fundamental basis for Balsa's existence, which was to take the lead and build up a black British consensus against the apartheid state. Another factor in the group's demise that was not acknowledged, but is nevertheless worthy of consideration, was the fact that Balsa's

pan-Africanist nationalism was overtaken by the ascendant ANC, which championed racial inclusion in its vision of the South Africa of the future. It was the ANC that appealed to the African majority in South Africa and which attracted their support, rather than PAC with its exclusivist vision. It can be argued that the ANC made a better case to the African majority for societal change in South Africa. The quickly disappearing members of Balsa may have felt that Balsa's narrow ideological approach was no longer appropriate for the new South Africa. It may also have been simply pragmatism on the part of certain individuals, evidenced by those who transferred their support to the AAM.¹⁰⁵ Drawing on its years of experience and its networks, the AAM was able to reshape into an organisation that continued to provide material, economic and educational aid to South Africans who needed to overcome the handicap of years of deprivation and inequality entrenched by the apartheid state. Balsa, even before its demise, suffered from a distinct lack of long-term strategic planning. It could not draw upon a wealth of experience and substantive years of activity, networks, or the resources necessary to remain useful and relevant to the needs of those it sought to aid in a sustained demonstration of pan-African solidarity.

Conclusion

The A-APRP and Balsa could never seriously challenge the formidable position that the AAM had attained in building an anti-apartheid consensus in Britain over a period of 30 years. However, the emergence of both groups was symptomatic of the desire of many black radicals to express their solidarity with southern Africans and to conceptualise this through a pan-Africanist perspective. The A-APRP and Balsa were links in a very long chain of Africanist self-agency that stretched throughout the twentieth century. Theirs was an attempt to acknowledge the universal struggle of the African people. They were also responding to a sense of pan-African duty to demonstrate solidarity and collaboration in the struggle by any means possible. Although the A-APRP and Balsa had a limited base of support, by virtue of the relatively low number of members and inability to recruit and build broader networks across black communities, nevertheless the message these groups presented resonated among those that came into contact with their activities. After a decade of intermittent racial unrest in the

cities of Britain, there was an appetite for change. There was a universal consensus that society, whether in Britain or elsewhere, had to be compelled towards more comprehensive forms of racial equality and fairer treatment, through the direct action of black citizens if necessary. The A-APRP and BALSAs tapped into this mood and found a space in which to articulate the uncompromising feelings of sections of the black community.

The value of the A-APRP lay in its ability to unite and focus a pan-Africanist and black British concern and action, however limited, towards supporting the southern African liberation struggle. Similarly, BALSAs emerged out of the frustration and discontent of black activists in the Labour Party who were clearly disillusioned with working in a framework that would not allow the formation of Black Sections within the party. This disillusionment contributed to their sense of alienation and detachment from the work of the AAM, and provided a vehicle for those wanting to galvanise support in an all-black forum denied to them in mainstream politics. Both groups provided a bridge across which members of the liberation movement could gain direct access into black communities, a bridge that the AAM had trouble forming. However, the racial separatism of these groups proved to be a weakness in their attempt to take the lead in building a black-led anti-apartheid consensus in Britain. They formed an ideological and political minority within a racial minority. Moreover, the eventual African victors in South Africa subscribed to an inclusive non-racial vision that was less pan-Africanist orientated. Although championing African self-sufficiency, the victorious ANC nevertheless sought to join the capitalist nation states. These were the same ones that had helped sustain the apartheid regime. As the party of government the ANC would join the Western economic power players on their own terms of financial free market liberalism.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

In 1999 at South Africa House in London there was a major retrospective to mark the 40th anniversary of the Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAM).¹ Discussion centred on the enormous contribution of the AAM to the overall international fight against apartheid. The speakers, many of whom were former AAM members and office holders in the movement, as well as academics, spoke to the audience about the origins of the movement, the political challenges it had to overcome, and various aspects of the effort it took to maintain the AAM as the premier international mouthpiece in support of those fighting the political regime in South Africa. In the assessment of the contribution of the personalities and specialist groups who formed the backbone of the movement, no direct mention was made of the parallel anti-racist activity in Britain during the last tumultuous 20 years of apartheid. Neither was there any suggestion that black activists fighting to eradicate racial victimisation in the British legal system, and other spheres of public life, might have broadened their activity to incorporate anti-apartheid campaigning.

The failure to acknowledge the black British perspective on such a divisive racial subject as South African apartheid seemed especially incongruous because, after Nelson Mandela's release, whenever he visited Britain he went out of his way to praise the contribution over the years of black 'Brothers and Sisters' who incorporated the South African struggle as part of their battle to gain equality of treatment in British society. The late Stuart Hall at the AAM's 40th anniversary did make oblique references to the sensitive issue of race within the AAM, and

hinted at the complex problems regarding black membership of the movement.² Yet the lack of reference at the South Africa House event to black British anti-apartheid activists left a number of questions as to whether black Britons made any noteworthy contribution to the British Anti-Apartheid Movement. If so, why were these narratives not emerging out of the many reminiscences of that period? During the opening of the AAM archives and previously unseen papers, an appeal was made for researchers to present as far as possible a balanced account of those engaged in the efforts to discredit and remove the Nationalist government determined to entrench apartheid. Especially as the outcome subsequently favoured the African majority, the temptation of a hagiographic account of the ANC or its chief supporter in Britain, the AAM, was to be avoided. At the South Africa House event it was argued that a 'warts and all' analysis would provide a more human and realistic account of the cost of confronting the apartheid regime and its supporting apparatus. It was in response to this call that the author began to pursue an avenue of research to uncover the hidden stories of individuals and groups who seemed invisible from the emerging story of the AAM.

Another episode that encouraged a focus on the contribution of black communities was a question-and-answer session at the African Studies Workshop at St Anthony's College, Oxford in 2003.³ On this occasion, a member of the audience expressed the view that ethnic minorities and in particular the African-Caribbean community in Britain, showed little interest in the political situation in South Africa during the years of apartheid, and contributed little to the international solidarity struggle. It was argued that the 'traditional' antipathy between Africans and African-Caribbeans ensured a detachment and total lack of interest in one another's affairs. Interviews with members of African-Caribbean communities soon uncovered the fallacy and ignorance of this assumption. Furthermore, it became clear that there was an historical tradition of intellectual and material exchange between Southern Africans and people of African descent in the diaspora. An encounter that confirmed these connections was a witness seminar at Sussex University.⁴ This was part of a series of seminars that examined various aspects of anti-apartheid activity in Britain. At this seminar, two veterans of the AAM acknowledged that members of the African Caribbean community in Britain had played a significant role at various

stages in the activities of the AAM. This assertion was qualified, however, with the acknowledgement that the issue of race in Britain, and the way in which black activists viewed racism out of their own experience, affected their approach to the southern African liberation movement and to the AAM – the vexed questions surrounding black–white collaboration also complicated matters. The ideological and cultural differences in their approach to tackling racism often led to misconceptions and frustration on both sides.⁵ However, those who wanted to transcend these matters did so and threw their efforts into supporting AAM campaigns irrespective of who the organisers were.

By looking at the black British engagement with one of the most compelling international issues of the second half of the twentieth century, this narrative has sought to illuminate an aspect of British political and social history that hitherto has not been much examined in the literature of the post-apartheid era. Various studies have examined black anti-racist struggles in this period, and have given attention to diasporan and pan-Africanist identifications with the global struggles of black people. But exploring the continuity of interest and action among peoples of African descent living in Britain towards the South African liberation struggle alongside the wider anti-apartheid movement has not been presented simultaneously. Exploring these disparate but sometimes complementary efforts to keep the realities of apartheid foremost in the public mind adds a further layer of understanding of the way in which the domestic and regional conflicts in South Africa reverberated in British society. Britain during the 1970s and 1980s was itself riddled with political, social and racial divisions. From the current vantage point, it can be easy to forget the intensity of the social unrest of this period. Union disputes and industrial workers strikes, widespread racial discrimination and retaliatory violence towards the police and symbols of the establishment, the persistence of rising unemployment and fears over immigration and non-white peoples living amongst the white population, added to the sense of societal disintegration and the loss of Britain's national self-respect, order and discipline in the aftermath of the loss of its imperial power. Against this background, the transnational worldview and activity of politically conscious black Britons is foregrounded within the wider anti-apartheid movement.

This narrative has offered new insight into the tensions that existed within the AAM, in particular the relationship between black activists and the white leadership of the AAM. The reasons for the 'coolness' between some black activists and the AAM have been examined. A significant factor was the way in which elements within the black community perceived the southern African struggle in purely pan-Africanist and exclusivist racial terms rather than as a struggle to replace racial supremacy with a truly representative and multiracial democratic society. For these groups it was a necessity that the fight against white supremacy in South Africa should be African-led, with pan-African support, and the wider black diaspora providing political and material solidarity. Black self-help groups were drawn to the more racially exclusivist approach of PAC as its ideology paralleled their strategic outlook for black empowerment, despite the fact that by the 1980s PAC was virtually redundant as a liberation movement. For some, the multiracialism and non-racialism of the ANC implied a compromise and pandering to the white desire to retain influence and a voice in how the country should be governed. Not all black groups felt this way, however. Through exploring a range of groups engaged in anti-apartheid activity, this narrative presents a picture of the spectrum of black activists for whom campaigning for the end of apartheid and white domination of Africans was an integral part of their understanding of the purpose and destiny of African peoples across the globe. The pragmatism of some black activists has been discussed, particularly as it became clear that the ANC and its multiracialism had greater support among the South African majority than did PAC, and that the ANC was the only fully representative political entity that could lead a post-apartheid South Africa.

The AAM and black groups committed to anti-apartheid action emerged from similar yet distinctive historical trajectories. The former emanated from a long legacy of anti-slavery radicalism and liberal anti-colonialism. This was also due to British colonial history, and its continuing strong connections and interests in southern Africa. Black British commitment emerged from a tradition of revolts against racial injustice and exploitation, anti-colonialism, pan-Africanist and black diaspora identification with the struggles of Africans. This meant that concern over the treatment of Africans in South Africa held a symbolic poignancy and was part of a wider identification with the long history

of the struggles of African peoples, which was viewed as ongoing and indivisible from the struggle against racism in contemporary Britain. These perspectives were illuminated through interviews with activists, speaking about the significance of opposing apartheid and the historical legacies driving this opposition. These testimonies complement the print sources and provide an insight into the pivotal moment when the racial and political struggles of southern Africa converged with the struggles and hopes of individuals in Britain, who empathised and identified with the determination of the South African majority to achieve equality of treatment under a representative democracy.

NOTES

Introduction

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9. Besides its biblical connotation the use of the term 'Babylon' came from Marcus Garvey's teachings on black oppression under white domination. This term was also appropriated by adherents of the Rastafarian faith and became popular to

- use during the 1980s when referring to the experience of living in Britain and dealing with racism.
10. Hyam, Ronald, and Henshaw, Peter, *The Lion and the Springbok, Britain and South Africa Since the Boer War* (Cambridge, 2003).
 11. Lissoni, Arianna, *The Anti-Apartheid Movement, Britain and South Africa: Anti-Apartheid vs Real Politik A History of the AAM and its Influence on the British Government's Policy Towards South Africa in 1964*, MA thesis, History Department SOAS, 2000; Fieldhouse, *Anti-Apartheid*.
 12. See contemporary documents; TNA, CAB 114/119, Sir J. Maud, Cape Town, to Lord Home, 14 May 1963; TNA, CAB 114/119, Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations and by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, 30 July 1963. TNA, FO 371/167557, Sir Alec Douglas Home, Instructions to Sir Hugh Stephenson when he takes up his post as ambassador, UK policy towards South Africa, 12 June 1963; TNA PREM 11/5112, Prime Minister's reply to a letter from the Archbishop of Canterbury concerning South Africa's political trials and the supply of arms, 6 May 1964. The South African government had in the past threatened the unilateral abrogation of the Simonstown agreement to remind Britain of the possible consequence of taking action against South Africa.
 13. Lissoni, *The Anti-Apartheid Movement, Britain and South Africa*, p. 4.
 14. Fieldhouse, *Anti-Apartheid*, p. 68.
 15. Thörn, Håkan, *Anti-Apartheid and the Emergence of a Global Civil Society* (New York, 2006), 77–8.
 16. Saunders, James, *South Africa and the International Media 1972–1979: A Struggle for Representation* (London, 2000); Zug, James, *The Guardian: The History of South Africa's Extraordinary Anti-Apartheid Newspaper* (Michigan, 2007).
 17. Portelli, Alessandro, 'What Makes Oral History Different?' in Perks, Robert, and Thomson, Alistair (eds), *The Oral History Reader* (Abingdon, 1998), p. 67.

Chapter 1 The West Indian and African Roots of the Anti-Apartheid Movement in Britain

1. The League of Coloured Peoples was founded in 1931 by Jamaican Dr Harold Moody to fight against the use of the colour bar in Britain and fight for the rights of black people living in Britain. It also campaigned on international matters. See, Killingray, David, 'To Do Something for the Race: Harold Moody and the League of Coloured Peoples', in Schwarz, Bill (ed.), *West Indian Intellectuals in Britain* (Manchester, 2004), pp. 51–70; Spry Rush, Anne, 'Imperial Identity in Colonial Minds: Harold Moody and the League of Coloured Peoples, 1931–50', *Twentieth Century British History*, 13, 4 (2002), pp. 356–83.
2. Cobley, Alan G., 'Far From Home': The Origins and Significance of the Afro-Caribbean Community in South Africa to 1930', in *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 18, 2 (June 1992), p. 370.

3. Hill, Robert A., and Piriou, Gregory A., "'Africa for the Africans': The Garvey Movement in South Africa, 1920–1940", in Marks, Shula, and Trapido, Stanley S. (eds), *The Politics of Race, Class and Nationalism in Twentieth Century South Africa* (Essex, 1987), pp. 209–53.
4. Cogley, Alan G., 'Far From Home', p. 353.
5. James, Winston, 'Migration, Racism and Identity Formation, the Caribbean Experience in Britain', in James, Winston, and Harris, Clive (eds), *Inside Babylon, The Caribbean Diaspora in Britain* (London, 1993), pp. 231–89.
6. Johnson, Howard, 'The Black Experience in the British Caribbean in the Twentieth Century', in Morgan, Philip, D., and Hawkins, Sean (eds), *Oxford History of the British Empire, Companion Series, Black Experience and the Empire* (Oxford, 2004), pp. 317–46.
7. In Cape Town alongside the West Indian seamen who chose to settle, was a small West Indian business and professional class of merchants, teachers, and missionaries.
8. Cogley, 'Far From Home', p. 370.
9. Parsons, Neil, *King Khama, Emperor Joe and the Great White Queen, Victorian Britain Through African Eyes* (Chicago, 1998); Parsons, Neil, "'No Longer Rare Birds in London": Zulu, Ndebele, Gaza, and Swazi envoys to England, 1882–1894', in Holbrook, Gerzina (ed.), *Black Victorians, Black Victoriana* (New Brunswick, 2003); Watson, Rick, L., 'The Subjection of a South African State: Thaba Nchu, 1880–1884', *Journal of African History*, 21, 3 (1980), pp. 357–73.
10. Shephard, Ben, *Kitty and the Prince* (London, 2003).
11. Adi, Hakim, 'West African Students in Britain 1900–1960: The Politics of Exile' in Killingray, David (ed.), *Africans in Britain* (London, 1994), p. 110.
12. Killingray, David, 'Race, Labour and Land, Black British Critics of South African Policies before 1948', unpublished paper presented at the African Studies seminar, SOAS, February 2006. See also: Adi, Hakim, 'West African Students in Britain, 1900–1960 – The Politics of Exile', in Killingray, David (ed.), *Africans*, pp. 107–28; Jenkins, Ray, 'Gold Coasters Overseas 1880–1919, with specific reference to their activities in Britain', *Immigrants & Minorities*, 4, 3 (1985), pp. 50–2; Rich, Paul, 'The Black Diaspora in Britain, Afro-Caribbean Students and the Struggle for a Political Identity, 1900–1950', *Immigrants & Minorities*, 6, 2 (1987), pp. 151–73.
13. Barber, James, *South Africa in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford, 1999), p. 58.
14. Pyrah, Geoffrey B., *Imperial Policy and South Africa 1902–1910* (Oxford, 1955), p. 103.
15. Esedebe, Peter O. (2nd edn), *Pan-Africanism, The Idea and Movement, 1776–1991* (Washington, DC, 1994), p. 107.
16. *The Times* (London), 7 November 1934, p. 18.
17. Barber, *South Africa*, pp. 58–9. Jan Smuts went on to have a remarkable wartime career during World War II.
18. *Manchester Guardian*, 28 May 1935, pp. 11–12.
19. Esedebe, *Pan-Africanism*, p. 108.

20. Ibid., p. 109.
21. For example see, 'A Statement to the British Parliament and People', London, 1935, by Tshekedi Khama, Chief and Regent of Bechuanaland, where he sets out his people's reasons for opposing incorporation. Parsons, Neil, *Select Bibliography on the History of Botswana* (Botswana, 1997); Parsons, Neil, 'Shots For A Black Republic? Simon Rathshosa and Botswana Nationalism', *African Affairs*, October 1974, 73, pp. 449–58.
22. *The Keys*, April–June 1938, pp. 85–6.
23. Torrance, David E., 'Britain, South Africa, and the High Commission Territories: An Old Controversy Revisited', *Historical Journal*, 41, 3 (1998), pp. 751–72.
24. For firsthand accounts of the act's devastating impact on African life in its first year of operation, see, Msimang, Richard, W., *Natives Land Act 1913 Specific Cases of Evictions and Hardships* (– Cape Town, 1996); Plaatz, Solomon, T., *Native Life in South Africa* (London, 1916).
25. The founders of the African National Congress, Pixley ka Isaka Seme, Alfred Mangena, Richard Msimang and George Montsioa trained as lawyers in the United Kingdom. Others such as Alfred Xuma pursued studies in America. See, Thompson, Leonard, *A History of South Africa, Revised Edition* (New Haven, 1995), pp. 174–5.
26. Killingray has discussed these possibilities using the example of Pixley Ka Isaka Seme's association with the Jamaican doctor H. Moody and former missionary in Africa, Theophilus Scholes. See, Killingray, David, 'Race, Labour and Land', unpublished paper, 2006.
27. Ibid. Also see, Higgs, Catherine, *The Ghost of Equality: The Public Lives of D.D.T. Jabavu of South Africa 1885–1959* (Ohio, 1995).
28. Between 1882 and 1968 there were 4,743 lynchings in the United, of those lynched 3,446 were black, which accounted for 72.7 per cent of all the people lynched. Not all lynching were recorded, for lynching statistics compiled by the Charles Chestnutt digital archive: <http://faculty.berea.edu/browners/chesnutt/classroom/lynchingstat.html>. See, Sherwood, Marika, 'Lynching in Britain', *History Today*, 49, 3 (1999), pp. 21–3.
29. Henry S. Williams formed the African Association in England in 1897, lobbied the British government on behalf of 'My ill-treated countrymen' in South Africa. He practised as a lawyer in South Africa 1903 to 1905, but was driven out by the vindictiveness and racism of white colleagues. See, Mathurin, Owen, C., *Henry Sylvester Williams and the Origins of the Pan African Movement 1869–1911* (Westport, 1976); Sherwood, Marika, *Origins of Pan-Africanism: Henry Sylvester Williams, Africa, and the African Diaspora* (London, 2010).
30. Coleman and Salt, *Ethnicity in the 1991 Census*, pp. 6–7; Dabydeen, David, Gilmore, John, and Jones, Cecily (eds), *The Oxford Companion to Black British History* (Oxford, 2010); Fryer, Peter, *Black People in the British Empire: An Introduction* (London, 1989); Gerzina, Gretchen, *Black England: Life Before Emancipation* (London, 1999); Gundara, Jagdish, S., and Duffield, Ian (eds), *Essays on the History of*

- Blacks in Britain* (Aldershot, 1992); Scobie, Edward, *Black Britannia, a History of Blacks in Britain* (Chicago, 1972); Walvin, James, *Making the Black Atlantic: Britain and the African Diaspora* (London, 2000); Walvin, James, *Passage to Britain, Immigration in Britain: History and Politics* (Harmondsworth, 1984).
31. Wright, Josephine, 'Early African Musicians in Britain', in Lotz, Rainer, and Pegg, Ian (eds), *Under the Imperial Carpet: Essays in Black History 1780–1950* (Crawley, 1986), pp. 14–25.
 32. Fryer, *Staying Power*; Killingray, *Africans in Britain*; Okokon, Susan, *Black Londoners 1880–1990* (Stroud, 1998).
 33. Ackah, William, 'Pan-African Consciousness and Identity, Reflections on the Twentieth Century', in Christian, Mark (ed.), *Black Identity in the 20th Century: Expressions of the US and UK African Diaspora* (London, 2002), pp. 3–31; Adi, Hakim, 'African Nationalism and Pan-Africanism in Britain 1900–70', unpublished paper presented at Boston University 11–13 April 2003; Esedebe, *Pan-Africanism*; Geiss, Imanuel, *The Pan-African Movement* (London, 1974).
 34. Ackah, William, 'Pan-African Consciousness', in Christian (ed.), *Black Identity*, pp. 5–6; Polsgrove, Carol, *Ending British Rule in Africa: Writers in a Common Cause* (Manchester, 2009).
 35. Adi, Hakim, and Sherwood, Marika (eds), *The 1945 Manchester Pan-African Congress Revisited* (London, 1995), p. 105.
 36. Ibid.
 37. Thompson, *A History of South Africa, Revised Edition*, p. 189.
 38. Adi and Sherwood (eds), *The 1945 Manchester*, p. 105.
 39. Esedebe, *Pan-Africanism*, p. 140.
 40. Ibid., p. 140. The term *berrenvolke* means master race.
 41. Ibid., p. 141. See Abrahams, Peter, *Tell Freedom* (London, 1981).
 42. Adi and Sherwood, *The 1945 Manchester*, p. 86.
 43. Ibid., p. 112.
 44. Higgs, *The Ghost of Equality*.
 45. Adi and Sherwood, *The 1945 Manchester*, p. 114.
 46. Ibid., p. 114. See Gish, Steven, *Alfred Xuma: African, American, South African* (London, 2000).
 47. Constantine, Learie, *Colour Bar* (London, 1954), p. 39.
 48. Spry-Rush, Anne, 'Imperial Identity in Colonial Minds, Harold Moody and the League of Coloured Peoples, 1931–50', *Twentieth Century British History*, 13, 4 (2002), pp. 356–83.
 49. Esedebe, *Pan-Africanism*, pp. 151–2, 154.
 50. By 1954 it was estimated that the 'Negro minority' in Britain including the indigenous Black populations had risen to 43,000. See, Coleman and Salt, *Ethnicity in the 1991 Census – Volume One*, p. 8.
 51. Parliamentary Debates (Lords), 4 July 1986 (London, HMSO), p. 1198.
 52. Access to this unpublished memoir was kindly granted by the Rt Hon. Bruce Pitt, son of the late peer. The unpublished memoirs of Lord David Pitt are currently in the possession of the family.

53. Extract from the unpublished memoirs of David Pitt, chapter 7, p. 7. For full quote see author's thesis. For information on Pitt, see http://www.100greatBlackbritons.com/bios/lord_david_pitt.html.
54. Ibid.
55. Ibid.
56. Bod.MSS.AAM 1, 'Committee of African Organizations Papers Concerning Establishment of Boycott Movement, 1959–60'. Bodleian Library of Commonwealth and African Studies, University of Oxford.
57. I am grateful to Hakim Adi for this information, his insights and for copies of his unpublished papers 'The Committee of African Organizations' (2003), and 'African Nationalism and Pan-Africanism in Britain 1900–70', presented at the Afro-Asian Conference, Boston University, April 2003.
58. Adi, 'The Committee of African Organizations', unpublished paper (2003), p. 4.
59. Bod.MSS.AAM 1, 'Constitution of the CAO'.
60. Adi, 'The Committee of African Organizations', p. 5.
61. Ibid., p. 6.
62. Fieldhouse, *Anti-Apartheid*, pp. 8–12.
63. Adi, Hakim, *West Africans in Britain, 1900–1960: Nationalism, Pan Africanism, and Communism* (London, 1997); Olusanya, Gabriel, O., *The West African Students Union and the Politics of Decolonization 1925–1958* (Ibadan, 1982).
64. Howe, Stephen, *Anti-Colonialism in British Politics: The Left and the End of Empire, 1918–1964* (Oxford, 1993).
65. Williams, Susan, *Colour Bar, The Triumph of Seretse Khama and his Nation* (London, 2007).
66. Adi, 'The Committee of African Organizations', p. 7.
67. Gurney, Christabel, "'A Great Cause": The Origins of the Anti-Apartheid Movement June 1959–March 1960', in *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 26, 1 (March 2000), pp. 123–44; Gurney, Christabel, 'When the Boycott Began to Bite', in *History Today*, 49, 6 (June 1999), pp. 32–4.
68. Gurney, Christabel, "'A Great Cause": The Origins of the Anti-Apartheid Movement June 1959–March 1960', p. 125.
69. In South Africa, the ANC announced that 26 June 1959, South African Freedom Day, would be a 'Day of Denial'. Its supporters were asked to boycott shops, cinemas and similar establishments. This day was also chosen to start the boycott in Britain. See Fieldhouse, *Anti-Apartheid*, pp. 5–6.
70. Johnson, Buzz, *I Think of My Mother, the Life and Times of Claudia Jones* (London, 1985); Schwarz, Bill, 'Claudia Jones and the West Indian Gazette': Reflections on the Emergence of Post-Colonial Britain', in *Twentieth Century British History*, 14, 3 (2003), pp. 264–85; Sherwood, Marika, Hinds, Donald, and Prescod, Colin, *Claudia Jones, A Life in Exile* (London, 1999).
71. Adi, 'The Committee of African Organizations', p. 10.
72. Gurney, 'When the Boycott Began to Bite', pp. 32–4.
73. Fieldhouse, *Anti-Apartheid*, pp. 15–16.

74. Israel, Mark, *South African Political Exiles in the United Kingdom* (Basingstoke, 1999), pp. 117–18.
75. Gurney, “‘A Great Cause’: The Origins of the Anti-Apartheid Movement June 1959–March 1960’, p. 127.
76. Adi, ‘The Committee of African Organizations’, p. 17.
77. Lodge, Tom, *Sharpeville: An Apartheid Massacre and its Consequences* (Oxford, 2011).
78. 26 June was chosen by the ANC as a national day to commemorate the struggle of the oppressed people of South Africa fighting against oppression. It was a day observed by the ANC liberation forces to redouble their efforts in the revolutionary struggle to remove racism and the tyranny of apartheid. Foreign sympathisers also marked the day and used it to heighten public awareness of the struggle. See Gurney, ‘A Great Cause’, p. 127.
79. TNA HO, 325/9, Special Branch Report 6, 19 December 1960.
80. Adi, ‘The Committee of African Organizations’, p. 20.
81. The support of Members of Parliament such as Jeremy Thorpe, Barbara Castle, Fenner Brockway, Tom Dribery, Anthony Greenwood and Robert Hughes helped to raise its profile.
82. Paul, Kathleen, *Whitewashing Britain: Race and Citizenship in the Postwar Era* (Ithaca, 1997).
83. Interview with Professor Stuart Hall, London, 13 June 2002.
84. Ibid.
85. Interview with Trevor Carter, 13 March 2001.

Chapter 2 ‘Enemies of Apartheid ... Friends of South Africa’: The British Government and the Anti-Apartheid Movement, 1950s–80s

1. Fieldhouse, *Anti-Apartheid*, pp. 8–9.
2. Adi, Hakim, ‘The Committee of African Organizations’, unpublished paper (2003); Gurney, Christabel, “‘A great cause’: The Origins of the Anti-Apartheid Movement June 1959–March 1960’, pp. 123–44.
3. Bod.MSS.AAM 819, ‘Correspondence with Members of Parliament 1960–1995, Includes MP’s Interests in South Africa 1986–91’. President of the AAM Trevor Huddleston to Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, 16 August 1985.
4. Bod.MSS.AAM 779, ‘Prime Minister’s Correspondence 1989–1995’, Margaret Thatcher to Trevor Huddleston, 10 April 1990.
5. Borstelmann, Thomas, *Apartheid’s Reluctant Uncle: The US & Southern Africa in the Early Cold War* (Oxford, 1993); Coker, Christopher, ‘South Africa and the Western Alliance 1949–81: A History of Illusions’, *Journal of the Royal United Services Institute for Defence* 127, 2 (1982), pp. 34–40.
6. Labour MP Aneurin Bevan was Minister for Health 1945–51. See, Ovendale, Ritchie, ‘The South African Policy of the British Labour Government, 1947–51’, *International Affairs*, 59, 1 (Winter 1982/83), pp. 40–58.

7. TNA FO 800/435, 'Communism in British Overseas Territories', Minutes Mr Bevan to Mr Attlee, 6 November 1948.
8. TNA CAB 129/55, C(52)306, 'Relations with the Union of South Africa in the Context of the United Nations', Cabinet Memorandum by Lord Salisbury', 24 Sept. 1952.
9. Lissoni, A., 'The Anti-Apartheid Movement: Britain and South Africa, Anti-Apartheid Protest vs Real Politik. A History of the AAM and its Influence on the British Government's Policy Towards South Africa in 1964', unpublished MA thesis, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London (2000), p. 4.
10. Hyam, Ronald, and Henshaw, Peter, *The Lion and the Springbok* (Cambridge, 2003), p. 272.
11. TNA CAB 129/55, C(52)306, 24 September 1952.
12. TNA DO 35/5343, No. 14, 'South Africa, Attitude of the Union Government to the UK Policy in Colonial Territories', Dispatch no2 from AW Snelling (Pretoria) to Lord Swinton', 11 January 1954.
13. Hyam and Henshaw, *The Lion and the Springbok*, p. 257.
14. TNA FO 371/80125, No. 1017, Document 155, in Hyman, Ronald (ed.), *Labour Government End of Empire, 1945–51* (London, HMSO, 1992).
15. Ibid.
16. Sir Alec Douglas-Home was Commonwealth Secretary in 1959 and briefly Prime Minister, 1963–64.
17. Harold Macmillan was Prime Minister 1957–63.
18. TNA DO 35/10621, No. 39, 'Policy Towards South Africa, The UN items, Lord Home to Mr Macmillan', 17 December 1959. This began as a Cabinet memorandum but Home turned it into a personal message to the Prime Minister.
19. Carter, Bob, Harris, Clive, and Joshi, Shirley, 'The 1951–1955 Conservative Government and the Racialization of Black Immigration', *Immigrants and Minorities*, 6, (3) (1987), pp. 335–47.
20. TNA DO 35/10621, No. 39, 'Policy Towards South Africa'.
21. Hyam, Ronald, and Henshaw, Peter, *The Lion and the Springbok*, pp. 257–9.
22. TNA DO 216/3 'The Racial Conflict in South Africa (Balances of British Interests'. 'South Africa "Confidential" Extract Western European Union (WEU) Ministerial Meeting 16–17 July 1964'.
23. TNA PREM 11/3072, 'Record of Discussion held at Groote Schuur, Cape Town', 2 February 1960.
24. Ibid.
25. Dubow, Saul, *The African National Congress* (Stroud, 2000), p. 77.
26. Roy Welensky (1907–91) a Rhodesian statesman was Prime Minister of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. See Smith, Ian, *Bitter Harvest: The Great Betrayal* (London, 2001); Wood, Richard, *So Far and No Further, Rhodesia's Bid for Independence During the Retreat From Empire 1959–1965* (Victoria, 2005).
27. TNA PREM 11/4609, 'Communist Subversion on the African Continent'. Alec Douglas-Home and colleagues prepared this memorandum for the Prime Minister to pass on to Sir Abubakar Talawfa Belewa of Nigeria.

28. Ibid.
29. Fieldhouse, *Anti-Apartheid*, p. 215.
30. TNA PREM 11/4489, 'Relations Between UK and South Africa 1962–1963, Prime Minister Office Correspondence and Papers 1951–1964'.
31. TNA PREM 11/3072, 2 February 1960.
32. Ibid.
33. Hyam and Henshaw, *The Lion and the Springbok*, pp. 254–72.
34. Makin, Michael, 'Britain, South Africa and the Commonwealth in 1960: The "Winds of Change" Re-assessed', *Historia* 41, 2 (November 1996), pp. 74–88.
35. Hyam and Henshaw, *The Lion and the Springbok*, pp. 259, 270. See, Hyam, Ronald, 'The Parting of the Ways: Britain and South Africa's Departure from the Commonwealth, 1951–61', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 26, 2 (May 1998), pp. 157–75; Hyam, Ronald and Louis, William, R. (eds), *Conservative Government and the End of Empire, 1957–1964, Economics International Relations and the Commonwealth Part II* (London, 2000); Wood, Richard, 'The Roles of Diefenbaker, Macmillan and Verwoerd in the Withdrawal of South Africa from the Commonwealth', *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 6, 1/2 (April/October, 1987), pp. 153–79.
36. Hyam and Henshaw, *The Lion and the Springbok*, p. 259.
37. Ibid.
38. Ibid., p. 165.
39. See a report of the proceedings in Segal, Ronald (ed.), *Sanctions Against South Africa* (Harmondsworth, 1964).
40. *East African Standard* (Nairobi), 14 April 1964, in *Spotlight on South Africa*, 24 April 1964, cited in Lissoni, 'The Anti-Apartheid Movement, Britain and South Africa'.
41. Ibid., pp. 4–5.
42. Ibid.
43. TNA FO 371/177072, 'Minutes of a Conversation Between J Wilson, Foreign Office, and Lord Chancellor', 18 December 1964.
44. Ibid.
45. Bod.AAM. MSS AAM 819, 27 May 1964, Barbara Castle MP writing to Dorothy Robinson.
46. TNA CAB 164/412, 'Visit of the PM (Mr Heath) to the USA and Canada', 26 November–23 December 1970'.
47. Bunting, Brian, *The Rise of the South African Reich* (Harmondsworth, 1969), p. 260.
48. Conservatively it is estimated that 3,548,900 people were moved between 1960 and 1983. See; Thompson, *A History of South Africa*, pp. 194–5.
49. Ibid., pp. 195–6. See, Wilson, Francis, and Ramphela, Mamphela, *Uprooting Poverty: The South African Challenge – Report for the Second Carnegie Inquiry into Poverty and Development in Southern Africa* (New York, 1989).
50. Thompson, Leonard, *A History of South Africa* (New Haven, 1995), pp. 194–8.
51. TNA CAB 164/412, 'Visit of the PM (Mr Heath) to the USA and Canada'.

52. Ibid.
53. Ibid.
54. Ibid.
55. Ibid.
56. Hoskins, Linus, 'Apartheid South Africa, The Commonwealth Stand and U.S. – British Collusion', *Current Bibliography on African Affairs*, 22, 1 (1990), pp. 1–18.
57. Statement by Mr Rowlands, 16 January 1978. This quotation was cited by Mrs Thatcher in her accusation of Labour Party opportunism when it called for sanctions. See CD-Rom, 'Margaret Thatcher, Complete Public Statements 1945–90' (Database and Compilation, OUP, 1999).
58. See, 'Official Report, 7 July 1976, Volume 914, c.1354', cited in Margaret Thatcher, *Complete Public Statements 1945–90*. Roy Hattersley was Foreign Office Minister in the Labour government during the early 1970s, later Secretary of State for Prices and Consumer Protection, 1976–9.
59. Bod.MSS.AAM 819, 31 January 1979. David Owen writing to Frank Hooley. Author's emphasis.
60. Bod.MSS.AAM 779, 'Prime Ministers Correspondence 1967–88'. Prime Minister Callaghan writing to Jack Jones, 8 November 1976. Callaghan wrote to Jones, a member of the Trade Union Congress general council, in reply to the trade union's expression of disapproval of Vorster's South African police actions against African protesters and its illegal occupation of Namibia.
61. Webster, P., 'Thatcher Risks Rift Over Sanctions', *The Times*, 14 June 1986.
62. Hansard Parliamentary Debates (Commons), 1979/80, Vol. 971, July, col. 699 (London, HMSO). Author's emphasis.
63. In her memoirs, the former Prime Minister argues passionately of the importance of British – South African relations and mutual interdependence in comparison to other African countries. See, Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years*, p. 513.
64. Interview with Lord (Robert) Hughes, London, 21 January 2004.
65. *The Times*, 31 July 1986; *The Times*, 1 August 1986.
66. Bod.MSS.AAM 863, 'Conservative Party 1960–94', 'The Conservative Approach to Africa', 9 April 1979. Extract from a speech by the Rt Hon. Francis Pym spokesman on Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, speaking to party workers at Swavesey, Cambridgeshire.
67. Ibid.
68. Bod.MSS.AAM 881 'Christian Concern for Southern Africa (CCSA) 1975–88'.
69. Hansard Parliamentary Debates (Commons), 1985, Vol. 84, 23 October, col. 404 (London, HMSO).
70. Bod.MSS.AAM 781, 'Foreign and Commonwealth Office 1985–86', Lady Young, Conservative minister in the FCO responding to a parliamentary question from Lord Brockway, 24 October 1985.
71. Suzman was the sole Progressive Party representative in the South African parliament 1961–74, and was joined by another six, then two more. Suzman was the scourge of the National Party over its apartheid laws.

72. *The Times*, 29 July 1986. Suzman argued that instead the black majority should instigate internal boycotts. See analysis of Buthelezi's role in Jones, John, *Storyteller the Many Lives of Laurens Van Der Post* (London, 2001).
73. Hansard Parliamentary Debates (Commons), Vol. 84, col. 406, 23 October 1985 (London HMSO). Statement by the Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office Malcolm Rifkind.
74. *Guardian*, 19 October 1987.
75. Margaret Thatcher, complete public statements 1945–90. Database and Compilation OUP 1999.
76. *Ibid.*
77. This argument had been expressed by Nelson Mandela in the treason trial speech of 1964. Hansard Parliamentary Debates (Lords), 'United Nations (Namibia) Bill', 22 October 1985 (London, HMSO), p. 1040. See the speeches of Lord Hatch and Lord Pitt on South Africa during this debate.
78. Barber, John, *South Africa in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford, 1999), p. 250.
79. Howe, Geoffrey, *Conflict of Loyalty* (London, 1995), p. 482.
80. Bod.MSS.AAM 819, 26 September 1983. Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher writing to Ian Lloyd MP.
81. In South Africa he saw 21 leading businessmen such as the director of the Iron and Steel Industrial Corporation (ISCOR), Barclays Bank, and representatives from multinational companies. He met with opposition politicians, leaders of the black community such as the chairman of the Soweto Committee of Ten and the Soweto Civic Association, Dr N. Motlana, a representative from Inkatha Central Committee, Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, the president of the South African Council of Churches and other prominent individuals in public life. Motlana later visited Britain, see, Bod.MSS.AAM 831, 'South African and other visitors to Foreign Office, 1978–94'.
82. Hansard Parliamentary Debates (Commons) Vol. 45, 4–15 July 1983 (London, HMSO). Statement of Malcolm Rifkind.
83. In 1979, the Conservative government reversed a decision by the previous Labour government to discourage British companies from increasing their investment in South Africa.
84. Hansard Hansard Parliamentary Debates (Commons), Vol. 77, 15–26 April 1984–1985 (London, HMSO).
85. Bod.MSS.AAM 818, 'AAM Memoranda Presented to the British Government and Concerning Government Policy on Southern Africa 1965–1994, Memoranda 1986–1990', 13 October 1988. Extract of speech by Sir James Cleminson, chairman of the British Overseas Trade Board.
86. Bod.MSS.AAM 818, 14 October 1988. Mike Terry to the Prime Minister.
87. Bod.MSS.AAM 818, 1 Nov 1988. Private Secretary Charles Powell to Mike Terry.
88. Labour Party Press Release 22 October 1985, provides details of directorships, consultancies or shareholdings held by MPs with companies with direct investments or subsidiaries in southern Africa. See, Bod.MSS.AAM 819, 'MPs Interests in Southern Africa 1986–1991'.

89. Ibid.
90. Hansard Parliamentary Debates (Commons), Vol. 967, 25 May 1979 (London, HMSO). Nearly a decade later, a Department of Trade minister informed the House of Commons, 'we continue to believe that civil trade with other countries, including South Africa, should be determined by commercial considerations, not by the character of the government of those countries'. Hansard Parliamentary Debates (Commons), col. 565, 17 July 1986 (London, HMSO).
91. Foreign Affairs Committee, Minutes of Evidence, Wed. 11 December 1985, 1985–6 (London, HMSO).
92. Bod.MSS.AAM 819, 'Correspondence with Members of Parliament 1960–1995', Margaret Thatcher to Trevor Huddleston, 10 April 1989.
93. 6th Report Foreign Affairs Committee session 1985–1986, South Africa Volume 1 Report, Appendices and Minutes of Proceedings (London, HMSO). p. 6.
94. Ibid., p. 7.
95. Hansard Parliamentary Debates (Commons), Vol. 84, 29 October 1985 (London, HMSO).
96. Bod.MSS.AAM 799, 'International Year of Mobilization for AAM Sanctions Memorandum', 1982, pp. 3–4. This document was prepared by the AAM.
97. Ibid., pp. 3–4.
98. Ibid., pp. 7–8.
99. Ibid.
100. Bingham, Thomas H., *Report on the Supply of Petroleum and Petroleum Products to Rhodesia* (London, 1978); Bod.MSS.AAM 818, 'Shell and BP Sanctions Busting, for the Bingham Inquiry, April 1977'. AAM Memoranda produced jointly with the Haslemere group.
101. 6th report Foreign Affairs Committee session 1985–1986, 'Effects of Sanctions on the South African Government' (London, HMSO), p. 21.
102. Bod.MSS.AAM 803–5, 'Malcolm Rifkind Minister of the Foreign Office', See, 'Policies for the Elimination of the Apartheid System', in 'The Case for a Review of British Policy on Southern Africa', AAM Memorandum to Malcolm Rifkind MP, Minister of State for the Foreign Commonwealth Office, 28 July 1983.
103. Fieldhouse, *Anti-Apartheid*, pp. 76–7.
104. The act stated that all new US trade and investment would be banned; US departments and agencies suppressed funds and assistance to the South African government. This act was a catalyst for similar sanctions in Europe and Japan. The withdrawal of operations by major corporations and the resultant loss of confidence in the South African economy caused it to go into deep recession.
105. Ibid., pp. 77–8. These activities did not achieve an immediate oil embargo. It was not until 1990 that Shell agreed to hold a debate at its annual AGM on its South Africa policy. At this juncture it was admitted that its company had felt the financial impact of the accumulated years of negative publicity.

106. Ibid., pp. 77–8.
107. Mayibuye Centre, ANC papers, Part 2, Box 216, Memo from AAM on British government ‘aid’ to South Africa, 3 February 1989; Bod.MSS.AAM 13, AAM *Annual Report*, 1987–8, pp. 12, 15.
108. Box 81, ‘ANC Scandinavian Mission 1954–1994 (FH)’, ‘Constrained by Sanctions, the Apartheid Economy in 1988, 1989’, ANC papers, University of Fort Hare.
109. Interview with Lord Carrington, London, 2 December 2004.
110. Interview with Lord Howe, London, 8 December 2004.
111. Ingham, Bernard, *Kill the Messenger* (London, 1991), p. 277.
112. *Guardian*, 7 December 1988; *Guardian*, 13 December 1988; *Guardian*, 17 December 1988.
113. Bod.MSS.AAM 790, ‘Home Office 1973–92’, 28 October 1983, Home Secretary Leon Brittan to Robert Hughes MP.
114. Ibid.
115. Ibid. In the same file see also letter of justification 8 June 1984, written by Leon Brittan to Robert Hughes MP.
116. One informant (who requested anonymity) recalled the constant surveillance throughout the 1980s of now deceased veteran AAM activist Ethel De Keyser’s north London property by men with South African accents.
117. Bod.MSS.AAM 801, AAM to Home Secretary William Whitelaw, 13 October 1982. See also, ‘Memorandum to the Home Secretary South African Subversion in Britain’.
In this memorandum to the Home Secretary the AAM set out clearly accounts of what it termed the ‘Escalating pattern of South African subversion in Britain’. A table of incidents at the end of the memorandum details in full South African covert operations in Britain from the 1970s to mid 1980s.
118. For subsequent accounts see Saunders, James, *Apartheid’s Friends: The Rise and Fall of South Africa Secret Service* (London, 2006), Bell, Tony, and Buhle, Dumisa, *Unfinished Business: South Africa, Apartheid and Truth* (London, 2003).
119. Bod.MSS.AAM 801, ‘AAM Memorandum to the Home Secretary South African Subversion in Britain’, 13 October 1982.
120. The memorandum also called for an investigation into activities of South African diplomats in the United Kingdom, including expelling any involved in illegal operations and not accepting diplomats with known security, military or police backgrounds. See, Bod.MSS.AAM 802, ‘Memorandum to the Home Secretary II’, 13 May 1983.
121. Bod.MSS.AAM 802, ‘Leon Brittan Home Secretary 1983’, 13 May 1983. The AAM prepared another memorandum to the Home Secretary, which examined the three trials at the Old Bailey relating to illegal activities of South African agents in Britain. From the AAM’s viewpoint this provided ample proof of the South African government’s illegal activities in the United Kingdom.

122. Bod.MSS.AAM 779, 'Prime Minister's Correspondence 1967–88', 25 November 1987. Prime Minister's Private Secretary Charles Powell to Robert Hughes MP.
123. Bod.MSS.AAM 790, 'Home Office', 7 October 1985, Home Secretary Douglas Hurd to Mike Terry.
124. The ANC office was the target of a bomb attack on 14 March 1982 with a 10lb bomb. The London offices of the ANC and SWAPO also had two break-ins and burglaries. The ANC member and former South African High Commissioner, George Johannes, described in horrifying detail the immediate aftermath and devastation of the bomb on the office, and police relations with the ANC. See, MCA6–293, George Johannes interview and transcript, Mayibuye Centre Oral History of Exiles Project, University of the Western Cape, Bellville, South Africa.
125. The Gleneagles Agreement was unanimously approved by the Commonwealth at a meeting at Gleneagles, Scotland. In 1977, Commonwealth presidents and prime ministers agreed, as part of their support for the international campaign against apartheid, to discourage contact and competition between their sportsmen and women with sporting organisations, teams or individuals from South Africa. The Gleneagles Agreement reinforced their commitment to oppose racism. This commitment was further strengthened by the Declaration on Racism and Racial Prejudice, which Commonwealth leaders adopted at their meeting in Lusaka in 1979. The Commonwealth was a relevant body to impose a sporting ban on South Africa because several of the sports most popular among white South Africans are dominated by Commonwealth member states, for example cricket and rugby union.
126. Interview with Mike Terry, London, 18 December 2000. Interview with Robert Hughes MP, London, 21 January 2004. Bishop Huddleston attended a conference on 'Child Repression and Law in Apartheid South Africa'; he requested a meeting with the Prime Minister about the detention, torture and imprisonment by the apartheid government of children. He was informed that the Prime Minister was too busy to meet him. See; Bod.MSS.AAM 779, 'Prime Minister's Correspondence 1967–88', 5 October 1987. Prime Minister's Private Secretary Charles Powell to Robert Hughes MP.
127. In her memoirs the Prime Minister took credit for Mandela's release. See, Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years*, pp. 531–4.
128. Bod.MSS.AAM 779, 'Prime Minister's Correspondence 1989–95', 6 July 1988. AAM President Trevor Huddleston to Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. The choice of 25 people was symbolic of the number of years Nelson Mandela had been imprisoned.
129. Bod.MSS.AAM 779, 'Prime Minister's Correspondence 1967–88', 15 July 1988, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher to Trevor Huddleston.
130. Minister wishes to remain anonymous.
131. The MP wishes to remain anonymous.

132. Ibid.
133. Hyam and Henshaw, *The Lion and the Springbok*, p. 332. See, *The Spectator* 27 July 1985.
134. *The New Statesman*, 1 August 1986. See Young, Hugo, 'Thatcher: The Honorary Citizen of South Africa', in the *Guardian*, 20 August 1987.
135. *The Listener*, 3 July 1986.
136. Bod.MSS.AAM 819, 1 August 1985. Steve Norris MP to Rt Hon. Sir Geoffrey Howe MP, Secretary of State for the Foreign Commonwealth Office.
137. The Tory Reform Group was established at the end of the 1960s as a group on the left of the Conservative Party to discuss domestic issues. Its publication, *Strongbow* is held at the British Library in London.
138. Austin, Dennis, 'The Commonwealth and South Africa', *Roundtable* 297 (1986); Chan, Stephen, 'The Commonwealth as an International Organisation: Britain and South Africa', *Roundtable* 312 (1989); Ganguly, Shivaji, 'South Africa and the Commonwealth from Nassau to London', *India Quarterly*, 42, 3 (1986); Hoskins, Linus, 'Apartheid South Africa: The Commonwealth Stand and US – British Collusion', *Current Bibliography on African Affairs*, 22, 1 (1990).
139. See Lord Vernon's views, Hansard Parliamentary Debates (Lords), Vol. 467 'UN (Namibia) Bill', 22 October 1985 (London, HMSO), p. 1040. Hansard Parliamentary Debates (Commons), Vol. 477, 'South Africa', 4 July 1986 (London, HMSO), pp. 1159–250.
140. Names of TRG members were President: Peter Walker MP; Patrons: Kenneth Baker, Lord Carrington of Hadley, Kenneth Clarke, Sir Ian Gilmour, Michael Heseltine, Peter Price, Douglas Hurd (vice-president), James Prior MP, Francis Pym, Earl of Stockton (former Prime Minister Harold Macmillan), Viscount Whitelaw, Fred Catherwood, Jim Lester, Chris Patten.
141. Interview with Peter Price, London, 18 December 2003.
142. *The Times*, 31 July 1986; *The Times*, 1 August 1986.
143. Bod.MSS.AAM 863, 'Conservative Party, Tory Reform Group Press Release', 31 July 1986.
144. Ibid.
145. Ibid.
146. Ibid.
147. Ibid.
148. Hanlon, Joseph (ed.), *South Africa The Sanctions Report, Documents and Statistics* (London, 1990).
149. A Guardian article alleged that British companies had been evading the ban with government help, *Guardian*, 7 February 1989.
150. *The New Statesman*, 16 February 1990.
151. Ibid.
152. *The Times*, 3 February 1990.
153. Fieldhouse, *Anti-Apartheid*, p. 445.

Chapter 3 The ANC, PAC and Opposition to Apartheid in Britain, 1960s–80s

1. Barber, James, *South Africa in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford, 1999); Beinart, William, *Twentieth Century South Africa* (Oxford, 2001); Eades, Lindsay M., *The End of Apartheid in South Africa* (Westport, 1999); Lodge, Tom, and Nasson, Bill (eds), *All, Here, and Now, Black Politics in South Africa in the 1980s* (London, 1992); Price, Robert, *The Apartheid State in Crisis, Political Transformation in South Africa, 1975–1990* (New York, 1991); Renwick, Robin, *Unconventional Diplomacy in Southern Africa* (London, 1997); Sparks, Allister *Tomorrow is Another Country, The Inside Story of South Africa's Negotiated Revolution* (London, 1997); Spence, Jack E., and Welsh, David, *Ending Apartheid* (London, 2010); Thompson, Leonard, *A History of South Africa* (New Haven, 1995); Waldmeir, Patti, *Anatomy of a Miracle: The End of Apartheid and the Birth of the New South Africa* (London, 1997); *The Road to Democracy in South Africa Volume 1, 1960–1970* (Cape Town, 2006); *The Road to Democracy in South Africa Volume 2, 1970–1980* (Pretoria, 2006); *The Road to Democracy in South Africa Volume 3, International Solidarity Part 1 & 2* (Pretoria, 2008); *The Road to Democracy in South Africa Volume 4, 1980–1990 Part 1 & 2* (Pretoria, 2010). Since the conclusion of this research a series of further volumes sanctioned by the South Africa government – an official history – has been published. See forthcoming publications: *The Road to Democracy: South Africans Telling Their Stories, Volume 2* (not yet published); *The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Volume 5, African Solidarity* (not yet published); *The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Volume 6 (1990–1996)* (not yet published).
2. See Programme of Action: Statement of Policy Adopted at the ANC Annual Conference, 17 December 1949, <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/progact.html>.
3. Worden, Nigel, *The Making of Modern South Africa* (Oxford, 2000), p. 98.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 113.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 119.
6. *Ibid.*
7. Williams, Gavin, 'Celebrating the Freedom Charter' in *Transformation* 6, 1988, pp. 73–86.
8. *The Spectator*, 1 April 1955.
9. *The Spectator*, 17 October 1958.
10. *The Times*, 5 August 1959.
11. Worden, Nigel, *The Making*, p. 120.
12. *Ibid.*
13. Gerhart, Gail, *Black Power in South Africa: The Evolution of an Ideology* (Berkeley, 1978), p. 67.
14. The Freedom Charter, Adopted at the Congress of the People, Kliptown, on 26 June 1955. <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/charter.html>.
15. Worden, Nigel, *The Making*, p. 120.

16. For the influence of Garveyism in South Africa see, Hill, Robert A., and Pirio, Gregory A., 'Africa for the Africans' in S. Marks, and S. Trapido (eds), *The Politics of Race, Class and Nationalism*, pp. 209–53; Vinson, Robert T., "'Sea Kaffirs': American Negroes and the Gospel of Garveyism in Early Twentieth-Century Cape Town", *Journal of African History*, 47, 2 (2006), pp. 281–303.
17. Hyam and Henshaw, *The Lion and the Springbok*, p. 260.
18. Ibid., p. 25.
19. Lodge, Tom, *Sharpeville* (Oxford, 2011).
20. Dugard, John, *Human Rights and the South Africa Legal Order* (New Jersey, 1978), pp. 108–10.
21. See list of political executions between 1960–9, in South African Democracy Education Trust (SADET), *The Road to Democracy in South Africa Volume 1 1960–1970* (Cape Town, 2004), Appendix D, pp. 695–6.
22. Fullard, Madeleine, 'State Repression in the 1960s' in South African Democracy Education Trust (SADET), *The Road to Democracy in South Africa Volume 1*, p. 390.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid.
25. See, Lissoni, Arianna, 'The South African Liberation Movements in Exile, c.1950–1970', unpublished PhD thesis (School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 2008), South African Democracy Education Trust, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa Volume 1*, South African Democracy Education Trust, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa Volume 2 1970–1980* (Cape Town, 2006); Thomas, Scott, *The Diplomacy of Liberation: The Foreign Relations of the ANC Since 1960* (London, 1996).
26. 'I Am Prepared to Die', Nelson Mandela's Statement from the dock at the opening of the defence case in the Rivonia Trial. Pretoria Supreme Court, 20 April 1964. <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/mandela/1960s/rivonia.html>.
27. Houston, Gregory, 'The Post-Rivonia ANC/SACP Underground' and Ndlovu, Sifiso M., 'The ANC in Exile, 1960–1970', in South African Democracy Education Trust, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa Volume 1*, pp. 601–60 and pp. 411–78; Plaatje, Thami K., 'The PAC's Internal Underground Activities, 1960–1980', and Plaatje, Thami K., 'The PAC in Exile', in South African Democracy Education Trust, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa Volume 2*, pp. 669–702 and pp. 703–46.
28. Among the arrested were Walter Sisulu, Govan Mbeki, Raymond Mhlaba, Andrew Mlangeni, Ahmed Kathrada, Dennis Goldberg, Lionel Bernstein, Bob Hepple, Arthur Goldreich, Harold Wolpe, James Kantor and others. Nelson Mandela was already serving a five-year sentence on Robben Island for leaving the country without a passport. See, Sisulu, Elinor, *Walter and Albertina Sisulu in Our Lifetime* (London, 2003), pp. 199–201, 208.
29. *New Statesman*, 19 June 1964. Before the Rivonia trial Nelson Mandela was already in prison having been arrested the previous year. At Liliesleaf Farm the

- police found documents during the raid incriminating Mandela. As a result he was charged and brought to trial with the others.
30. The *Observer* in ILN, PRO 20, 'April Report', 1964, quoted in Hyam and Henshaw, *The Lion and the Springbok*, p. 321.
 31. Ibid. the *Daily Telegraph* in ILN, PRO 20, 'April Report', 1964.
 32. *The Times* in ILN, PRO 20, 'April Report' 1964, quoted in Hyam and Henshaw, *The Lion and the Springbok*, pp. 321–2.
 33. Thompson, *A History of South Africa*, p. 211.
 34. Karis, Thomas, and Gerhart, Gail, *From Protest to Challenge: A Documentary History of African Politics in South Africa, 1882–1990 Volume 5. Nadir and Resurgence, 1964–1979* (Pretoria, 1997), p. 29; Ralinala, Rendani M., et al., 'The Wankie and Sipolilo Campaigns' in South African Democracy Education Trust (SADET), *The Road to Democracy in South Africa Volume 1*, pp. 479–540.
 35. Houston, Gregory, 'The Post-Rivonia ANC/SACP Underground' in *The Road to Democracy in South Africa Volume 1*, pp. 601–60.
 36. Mzamane, Mbulelo V., 'The Black Consciousness Movement', in *The Road to Democracy in South Africa Volume 2*, p. 101.
 37. Suttner, Raymond, 'The African National Congress (ANC) Underground Between Rivonia and 1976', paper presented to ICS/SOAS, London, 10–12 September 2004, p. 8. <http://commonwealth.sas.ac.uk/resource/suttner.pdf>.
 38. Houston, 'The Post-Rivonia ANC/SACP', p. 603.
 39. Ibid., p. 605.
 40. Ibid., pp. 605–6, 612–13.
 41. Suttner, 'The African National Congress', p. 10.
 42. Ibid., p. 11.
 43. Ibid., p. 12.
 44. Ibid., p. 13.
 45. Frederikse, Julie, *The Unbreakable Thread: Non-Racialism in South Africa* (Johannesburg, 1990), p. 124.
 46. There is an interesting discussion about the ambiguities of Jacob Zuma's role in the struggle. See, Chan, Stephen, *Southern Africa: Old Treacheries and New Deceits* (New Haven, 2011). Clive Glaser provides a rather different interpretation of the factors that led to the youth revolt in Soweto in 1976. See Glaser, Clive, "'We must infiltrate the Tsotsis': School Politics and Youth Gangs in Soweto, 1968–76", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 24, 2 (1998), pp. 301–23.
 47. Suttner, 'The African National Congress', p. 16.
 48. Ibid.
 49. Ibid.
 50. Ibid., pp. 27–8.
 51. Ibid., p. 28.
 52. Ibid.
 53. Mzamane, Mbulelo V., 'The Black Consciousness Movement', pp. 102–3.
 54. Ibid., pp. 104–6, 111–20.

55. Stubbs, Aelred (ed.), *I Write What I Like/Steve Biko: A Selection of his Writings* (London, 1987), p. 24.
56. Ferguson, James, *Global Shadows: Africa in the Neo-Liberal World Order* (Durham, 2006), p. 59.
57. Mzamane, Mbulelo V., 'The Black Consciousness Movement', pp. 117–18; Stubbs, Aelred (ed.), *I Write What I Like*, pp. 80–6.
58. Stubbs, Aelred (ed.), *I Write What I Like*, pp. 48–53.
59. Mzamane, Mbulelo, V., 'The Black Consciousness Movement', pp. 124–6.
60. Stubbs, Aelred (ed.), *I Write What I Like/Steve Biko*, p. 65.
61. Mzamane, Mbulelo, V., 'The Black Consciousness Movement', pp. 99–159.
62. *Ibid.*, p. 100.
63. *Ibid.*
64. *Ibid.*, p. 158.
65. Stubbs, Aelred (ed.), *I Write What I Like*, p. 24.
66. Mzamane, Mbulelo V., 'The Black Consciousness Movement', in South African Democracy Education Trust, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa Volume 2*, p. 158.
67. *Ibid.*, pp. 152–3.
68. *Ibid.*, pp. 153–4.
69. *Ibid.*, p. 154.
70. *Ibid.*, p. 155.
71. *Ibid.*
72. *Ibid.*, p. 157.
73. Thörn, *Anti-Apartheid and the Emergence of a Global Civil Society*, p. 54.
74. Hirson, Baruch, *Year of Fire, Year of Ash, the Soweto Revolt, Roots of Revolution?* (London, 1979); Lee, Carol, *A Child Called Freedom, An African Journey* (London, 2006).
75. Dubow, Saul, *The African National Congress* (Stroud, 2000), pp. 82–4.
76. Lodge and Nasson (eds), *All, Here, and Now*, p. 47. The tricameral parliament gave limited political power to the coloured and Indian population but the black majority was excluded.
77. For in-depth detail of its origins and activity see, Seekings, Jeremy, *The UDF: A History of the United Democratic Front in South Africa 1983–1991* (Oxford, 2000).
78. Davis, Stephen M., *Apartheid's Rebels* (New Haven, 1987), p. 102.
79. *Ibid.*
80. Thörn, *Anti-Apartheid*, p. 56.
81. Callinicos, Luli, *Oliver Tambo: Beyond the Engeli Mountains* (Claremont, 2004), pp. 468, 552–4.
82. *Ibid.*
83. Thörn, *Anti-Apartheid* pp. 56–7.
84. The Commonwealth Group of Eminent Persons, *Mission to South Africa: The Commonwealth Report, The Findings of the Commonwealth Eminent Persons Group on Southern Africa* (London, 1986), pp. 150–6.

85. Callinicos, *Oliver Tambo*, p. 566.
86. 'Minutes of Evidence Foreign Affairs Committee', 29 October 1985, Parliamentary Papers (Commons), Vol. 61–4, 1985–6 (London, HMSO). See Sixth Report Foreign Affairs Committee session 1985–6: South Africa: Observations by the Government presented by Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs; Minutes and Evidence, Vol. 1 Report, Appendices and Minutes of Proceedings (London, HMSO), House of Commons Session 1990–1 Foreign Affairs Committee 'UK Policy Towards South Africa and the Other States of the Region', Vol. I.
87. Callinicos, *Oliver Tambo*, p. 578.
88. DeFrongo, James V. (ed.), *Revolutionary Movements in World History from 1750 to the Present Volume 3, R-Z* (California, 2006), p. 793.
89. Lodge and Nasson (eds), *All, Here, and Now*, pp. 152–66. See also, Mzala, *Gatsba Buthelezi, Chief With a Double Agenda* (London, 1988); Maré, Gerhard, and Hamilton, Georgina, *An Appetite for Power: Buthelezi's Inkatha and South Africa* (Birmingham, 1987).
90. Lodge and Nasson (eds), *All, Here, and Now*, pp. 164–5.
91. Thompson, *A History of South Africa*, p. 230.
92. *Ibid.*, p. 238.
93. *The Times*, 29 July 1986.
94. Jones, John D.F., *Storyteller* (London, 2001), pp. 331–40, 414–34.
95. Interview with Geoffrey Howe, London, 8 December 2004.
96. Interview with Douglas Hurd, London, 1 December 2004.
97. Bell, Terry and Ntsebeza, Dumisa B., *Unfinished Business* (London, 2003); Boraine, Alex, *A Country Unmasked: Inside South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission* (Oxford, 2004).
98. Fieldhouse, *Anti-Apartheid*, pp. 263–4; Barber, *South Africa in the Twentieth Century*, pp. 203–5.
99. This individual wishes to remain anonymous.
100. *Ibid.*
101. Lodge, *Black Politics*, pp. 306–12, 344–5. See Dubow, *The African National Congress*; Lodge and Nasson (eds), *All, Here, and Now*; Thomas, *The Diplomacy of Liberation*.
102. Plaattjie, Thami K., 'The PAC's Internal Underground Activities, 1960–1980' and 'The PAC in Exile' in South African Democracy Education Trust, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa Volume 2 1970–1980* (Cape Town, 2006), pp. 669–746.
103. This individual wishes to remain anonymous.
104. Lodge, Tom, *Black Politics*, pp. 307–10.
105. Barber, James, *South Africa in the Twentieth Century*, pp. 155–6.
106. Thörn, Håkan, *Anti-Apartheid*, pp. 51–2.
107. Thomas, Scott, *The Diplomacy of Liberation*, pp. 46–8.
108. Thörn, Håkan, *Anti-Apartheid*, p. 54. Arthur Goldreich, a member of Umkhonto's technical committee prepared a draft plan 'Operation Mayibuye' of

- sabotage. At the Rivonia trial the ANC claimed this plan was only to be used as the last resort. See, Thomas, Scott S., *The Diplomacy of Liberation* pp. 244–5.
109. Thörn, *Anti-Apartheid*, p. 55.
 110. Thomas, Scott, *The Diplomacy of Liberation*, pp. 40–2.
 111. Ibid.
 112. Ironically, although both Sobukwe and Biko were advocates of African independence from white influence they formed strong friendships with liberal white men who went on to champion the justice of their struggle. See, Pogrand, Benjamin, *How Can Man Die Better... Sobukwe and Apartheid* (London, 1990); Woods, Donald, *Biko* (London, 1987).
 113. Dubow, *The African National Congress*, p. 61.
 114. Thomas, *The Diplomacy of Liberation*, pp. 33–7.
 115. Ibid. PAC was initially based in Maseru in 1962, Dar es Salaam in 1964 and Lusaka in 1967 before moving to Dar es Salaam. It maintained offices in London, Accra, Cairo, Francistown, Algiers, Lagos and Leopoldville.
 116. Thörn, *Anti-Apartheid*, p. 53.
 117. AZAPO – The Azanian People's Organisation related to the Black Consciousness Movement emerged in the late 1970s.
 118. Thörn, *Anti-Apartheid*, p. 57.
 119. The director of PAC'S foreign affairs David Sibeko was assassinated by fellow activists in Dar es Salaam in 1979. This led to the expulsion of Potlako Leballo, leader of PAC since 1962. Leballo had been responsible for expulsions of other members. See South African Democracy Education Trust, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa Volume 2*, pp. 745–6.
 120. Taylor, Ian, 'The Ambiguous Commitment, The People's Republic of China and the Anti-Apartheid Struggle in South Africa', *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 18, 1 (2000), pp. 91–106.
 121. Thörn, *Anti-Apartheid*, p. 59.
 122. Ibid.
 123. Ibid., pp. 76–80.
 124. Anecdotes abound of the surprise of South African government representatives and business leaders when meeting members of the ANC leadership for the first time. See, Sparks, Allister, *Tomorrow is Another Country: the inside Story of South Africa's Negotiated Revolution* (London, 1997).
 125. Plaatje, Thami K., 'The PAC in Exile', in South African Democracy Education Trust, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa Volume 2*, pp. 703–46.
 126. APLA – the armed wing of PAC – was initially called Poqo until 1968. It was the first South African armed wing to use violence against civilians. It was based in Lesotho until 1965, then later had alliances with other southern African liberation organisations such as ZANU in Rhodesia, UNITA and the FNLA in Angola, and COREMO in Mozambique. Uganda and Libya provided military training. South African Democracy Education Trust, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa Volume 2*, pp. 676–700.
 127. Ibid., pp. 669–700.

128. Lodge and Nasson (eds), *All, Here, and Now*, pp. 194–8.
129. Ibid.
130. Defronzo, James V. (ed.), *Revolutionary Movements*, p. 794. In 1994, the year of the first multiracial elections, the resounding electoral endorsement of the ANC's legitimacy to govern rendered PAC an 'also ran'. It performed poorly at the elections garnering only 1.3 per cent of the national vote.
131. Interview with Suresh Kamath, London, 14 July 2003.
132. Interview with Trevor Phillips, London, 19 February 2002.
133. Interview with Linton Kwesi Johnson, London, 15 May 2002. During the 1980s Mr Johnson instructed his wife not to purchase South African goods. He informed the author that this was common practice among his family and circle of friends and most black communities around the country.
134. See the following chapters for further discussion of the opinions of black activists towards the AAM.
135. Thörn, *Anti-Apartheid*, p. 92.
136. Ibid.
137. Ibid.
138. Interview with Dan Thea, London, 20 December 2004.
139. The informant wishes to remain anonymous. Individuals were often in fear of the South African security forces and assassination; the murders of Ruth First in Maputo, Mozambique in 1982, and in 1988, Dulcie September, the ANC representative in Paris, caused deep disquiet.
140. This individual wishes to remain anonymous.
141. Originally called Selous Street but renamed with the approval of the council.
142. Fieldhouse, *Anti-Apartheid*, p. 295. See, Bod.MSS.AAM 934, 'Bombing of ANC Office in London in March 1982, 1982–9'.
143. Interview with Dame Jocelyn Barrow, London, 7 February 2004; interview with Ethel De Keyser, London, 3 March 2001; interview with Lord Robert Hughes, London, 21 January 2004.
144. Fieldhouse, *Anti-Apartheid*, pp. 296–7. See Guardian obituaries, Alan Brooks (1940–2008), *Guardian*, 23 May 2008; Ethel De Keyser (1926–2004), *Guardian*, 23 July 2004.
145. Fieldhouse, *Anti-Apartheid*, p. 297. Under the 1981 constitution the National Committee consisted of the president, vice-president and sponsors. There were 30 individual members elected by the AGM, 25 representatives of national and regional AAM chapters elected annually from among such membership, an unlimited number of representatives of all affiliated local groups and up to ten co-opted members. The South African liberation movements and other supporting organisations had special observer status. The National Committee, no longer the official policy-making body, still had a heavy workload. It met six times a year, elected the executive committee and planned the implementation of AGM resolutions. It received and dealt with reports from various campaigns and subcommittees, and approved future campaign plans prepared by the executive committee.

146. Israel, *South African Political Exiles*, p. 87.
147. *Ibid.*, p. 91.
148. *Ibid.*
149. To re-establish control in the townships, between 20 July 1985 and 7 March 1986 the government applied a state of emergency (SOE) across the country. On 12 June 1986 it was announced that SOE would be renewed annually and indefinitely across the country. See, Thompson, *A History of South Africa*, pp. 235–40.
150. Bod.MSS.AAM 57, 'Into the 1990s', p. 3; Bod.MSS.AAM 13, *AAM Annual Report*, 1987–88, p. 45; Bod.MSS.AAM 13, *AAM Annual Report*, 1988–9, pp. 28, 34; Bod.MSS.AAM 13, *AAM Annual Report*, 1989–90, p. 43.
151. Fieldhouse, *Anti-Apartheid*, p. 303.
152. Bod.MSS.AAM 13, *AAM Annual Report*, 1988–9, p. 34.
153. Fieldhouse, *Anti-Apartheid*, p. 304.
154. *Ibid.*, p. 70.
155. Fieldhouse, *Anti-Apartheid*, p. 69. Bod.MSS.AAM 13, *AAM Annual Reports*, 1978–9, p. 13.
156. Bod.MSS.AAM 13, *AAM Annual Reports*, 1979–80, p. 11.
157. Fieldhouse, *Anti-Apartheid*, p. 69.
158. Mayibuye Centre, ANC papers, pt. 2, Box 1, AAM draft reply to PAC/CPC memo, n.d. (August 1965).
159. Bod.MSS.AAM 13, *AAM Annual Report*, 1984–5, p. 13.
160. Fieldhouse, *Anti-Apartheid*, p. 72.
161. Bod.MSS.AAM 13, *AAM Annual Report*, 1988–9, p. 12.
162. Bod.MSS.AAM 13, *AAM Annual Report*, 1989–90, p. 17.
163. Fieldhouse, *Anti-Apartheid*, p. 72.
164. *Ibid.*, pp. 365–72.
165. In 1980, the AAM held a joint UN Department of Public Information Symposium looking at the role of transnationals in South Africa. The sessions were aimed at trade unions and argued for the necessity of economic sanctions. The AAM and UN Centre Against Apartheid produced a profile of 65 transnationals operating in South Africa. See, Bod.MSS.AAM 1661, 1980–2, 'UN Symposium on Transnational Corporations in South Africa and Namibia', 1980–9.
166. In 1977, these principles promoted corporate responsibility and stipulated requirements as a condition for US business to function in South Africa. <http://www.thesullivanfoundation.org/gsp/endorsement/history/default.asp>.
167. Barber, James, 'The EEC Code for South Africa: Capitalism as a Foreign Policy Instrument', *The World Today* 36 (1980), pp. 79–87; Holland, Martin, 'Disinvestment, Sanctions and the European Community's Code of Conduct in South Africa', *African Affairs*, 8, 353 (October 1989), pp. 529–47.
168. Fieldhouse, *Anti-Apartheid*, p. 74.
169. Bod.MSS.AAM 799, Memoranda 1986–94, 'International Year of Mobilisation for Sanctions against South Africa 1982'. This document set out

- proposals for sanctions against South Africa and was produced for the minister at the FCO, Richard Luce MP, Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 8 March 1982.
170. Bod.MSS.AAM 780, 'Foreign and Commonwealth Office 1982–84, 19 February 1982, Richard Luce MP to Robert Hughes MP'.
 171. Fieldhouse, *Anti-Apartheid*, p. 75.
 172. Bod.MSS.AAM 13, *AAM Annual Report*, 1982–3, p. 11.
 173. Bod.MSS.AAM 803, Malcolm Rifkind, minister at Foreign Office, 28 July 1983, 'Memo to Malcolm Rifkind MP Minister of State Foreign Commonwealth Office, Ten Point Programme of Action: A Case for Review of British Policy on Southern Africa', 28 July 1983.
 174. Bod.MSS.AAM 13, *AAM Annual Report*, 1985–6, p. 9.
 175. Hoskins, Linus (1990), 'Apartheid South Africa, The Commonwealth Stand and US-British Collusion', *Current Bibliography on African Affairs* 22, 1. pp. 1–18.
 176. Commonwealth Group of Eminent Persons, *Mission to South Africa, the Commonwealth Report* (London, 1986); Hanlon, Joseph (ed.), *South Africa, the Sanctions Report, Documents and Statistics* (London, 1990).
 177. TNA CAB 129/114C (63) 109, 'Memo from Foreign Secretary Lord Home to Sir Hugh Stephenson, Ambassador to South Africa', 28 June 1963.
 178. Interview with Lord Carrington, London, 2 December 2004.
 179. Fieldhouse, *Anti-Apartheid*, p. 89.
 180. *Ibid.*, pp. 70, 77.
 181. Fieldhouse, *Anti-Apartheid*, p. 94.
 182. *Ibid.*, pp. 89–90. ELTSA was formed in 1974 to campaign against Midland Bank's loan to the South Africa government. At first it worked through churches and Christian organisations, by 1979 its committee was reconstructed to include a broader range of individuals from churches, student organisations, trade unions and community organisations.
 183. Rhodes, David, 'The Anti-Apartheid Movement in Britain', unpublished MPhil, University of Oxford (2000), p. 13.

Chapter 4 The Anti-Apartheid Movement and the Formation of the Black and Ethnic Minority Committee During the 1980s

1. For the other specialist AAM committees see, Bod.MSS.AAM 333–4, Women's Council (Women's Committee until 1989), 1975–94; Bod.MSS.AAM 142–4, Multi-faith committee 1967–94; Bod.MSS.AAM 109–13, Health Committee 1960–91; Bod.MSS.AAM 161–75, Trade Union Committee 1960–95; Bod.MSS.AAM 372–5, Youth steering Committee/Student Committee 1961–95.
2. Interview with Lord Hughes of Woodside, London, 21 January 2004.
3. Interview with Lord Hughes of Woodside, London, 21 January 2004.

4. Solomos, John, *Race and Racism in Britain* (3rd edn) (London, 2003), pp. 172–90.
5. James, Cyril L.R., *Beyond a Boundary* (London, 1963).
6. Fieldhouse, *Anti-Apartheid*, pp. 97–9. http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/may/22/newsid_2504000/2504573.stm BBC website '1970: South Africa Cricket Tour Called Off', accessed 19 August 2013.
 South Africa's discriminatory practices in sport had serious repercussions on the careers of sportsmen and women. See, Murray, Bruce K., 'Politics and Cricket: The D'Oliveira Affair of 1968', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 27, No. 4, December 2001, pp. 667–84.
7. Hain, Peter, *Sing the Beloved Country: The Struggle for the New South Africa* (London, 1996), p. 58. See, Hain, Peter, *Don't Play with Apartheid: Background to the Stop the Seventies Tour Campaign* (London, 1971).
8. Interview with Ethel De Keyser, London, 3 March 2001.
9. Folder A, 'South Africa House Vigil and Demonstrations – 1. Saturday 26 Jun 1976', 'Newspaper clippings', West Indian Standing Conference papers, Westminster Bridge Road, London.
10. The clashes between the police and black youth were due to the stop-and-search policing of the force under the Vagrancy Act of 1824, commonly known as the 'Sus' law. It effectively permitted the police to stop, search and arrest anyone they chose, purely on the basis of suspicion that they might commit a crime.
11. Humphry, Derek, *Police Power and Black People* (London, 1972), pp. 70–1.
12. See, Report of the Working Party on Community/Police Relations in Lambeth (London, Lambeth Public Relations Division, 1981); Hall, *Policing the Crisis*; Humphry, *Police Power*, pp. 70–1; the Scarman Report of 1981 covered similar topics of heavy-handed police treatment of young blacks, which was a major contributor to the Brixton riots. Scarman, Leslie G., *The Brixton Disorders 10–12 April 1981: Report of an Enquiry* (London, 1981).
13. Phillips, Mike, and Phillips, Trevor, *Windrush: The Irresistible Rise of Multi-Racial Britain* (London, 1998), p. 281.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 282.
15. Interview with Onyekachi Wambu, London, 16 June 2002. See, Wambu, Onyekachi, *Empire Windrush: Fifty Years of Writing about Black Britain* (London, 1998).
16. Henry, William A., *What the Deejay Said, A Critique From the Street!* (London, 2006), p. 239.
17. See Alex Pascall remarks below.
18. Steel Pulse, 'Biko's Kindred Lament' on the album *Tribute to the Martyrs*, released by Island Records (1976). For full lyrics see, <http://www.andybrouwer.co.uk/disc.html>.
19. 'Gimme Hope Jo'anna' is a song originally sung by the Guyanese musician Eddy Grant, and became a well-known anti-apartheid reggae anthem from its release in the 1980s. Though the song was banned by the South African government when it was released, it was widely played in South Africa

- nonetheless. It reached number seven in the UK singles chart. 'Jo'anna' in the lyrics represents the city of Johannesburg, and the lyrics critique the South African government that ran the apartheid system. Eddy Grant, 'Gimme Hope Jo'anna' on the album *File Under Rock*, released in 1988. For full lyrics see, <http://www.lyricsbox.com/eddy-grant-lyrics-gimme-hope-joanna-rg5p6mw.html>.
20. See, Clarke, Claudia L., 'Music, Politics and Violence: A Study of Calypso and Steel Band From Trinidad, Reggae From Jamaica and Their Impact on a Multi-Ethnic Community in London in the Late 20th Century', PhD thesis, Goldsmiths, University of London, 2000.
 21. See, 'Rastafari, Babylon, Dread History, and the Politics of Jah' and 'Get Up, Stand Up, The Redemptive Poetics of Bob Marley', in Bogues, Anthony, *Black Heretics, Black Prophets: Radical Political Intellectuals* (London, 2003), pp. 153–207. During what became known as the Battle of Lewisham in 1977, according to an eye-witnesses an elderly black woman played Marley's 'Get up, Stand up' to galvanise the anti-racist marchers. See, Renton, David, 'When We touched the Sky: The Anti-Nazi League 1977–1981, August 1977 The Battle of Lewisham', http://whenwetouchedthe.sky.com/anl_arts02.html.
 22. Interview with Benjamin Zephaniah, London, 18 December 2003. For an analysis of the sound systems and political discourse see, Henry, *What the Deejay Said*.
 23. Gilbert, Shiri, 'Singing Against Apartheid: ANC Cultural Groups and the International Anti-Apartheid Struggle', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 33, 2 (June 2007), pp. 421–41.
 24. Interviews took place in 2002–3 and the individuals wish to remain anonymous.
 25. See Steel Pulse's song 'Handsworth Revolution' on the album *Handsworth Revolution* released by Island Records in 1978. The words of this song make a direct link between what was happening on the streets of South Africa and the streets of Handsworth in Birmingham, an area with a large black and Asian community that had troubled relations with the police throughout the 1970s and 1980s. For full lyrics see <http://www.mp3lyrics.org/s/steel-pulse/handsworth/>.
 26. Bod.MSS.AAM 13, AAM *Annual Report*, October 1977–September 1978, p. 24.
 27. Phillips and Phillips (eds), *Windrush: The Irresistible Rise*, pp. 324–48.
 28. Interview with Russell Profit, London, 18 November 2003. See also, Goulbourne, Harry, *Caribbean Transnational Experience* (London, 2002).
 29. In the 25 years since the New Cross Road fire and numerous enquiries, the 'external missile theory' is no longer held, it is believed that the fire may have started from inside the party. See, Singh, Rob, 'Fresh Calls For Inquiry Into New Cross Fire that Killed Fourteen People', *Evening Standard* (London), 16 January 2006; Millar, Chris, 'Anger of Families at Unresolved New Cross Fire Verdict', *Evening Standard* (London), 7 May 2004.
 30. This episode in Lewisham's local history was marked by a 30-year anniversary conference at Goldsmiths, University of London, 'Remembering and Reflecting

on the Battle of Lewisham in August 1977', on 10 November 2007. Former marchers, local activists and academics discussed the significance of the day and the lessons that can be drawn for race relations in the current climate. See, Lewisham 77' website <http://lewisham77.blogspot.com/>.

31. According to eye-witness accounts, while marching along Fleet Street they received a hail of hostile racist abuse from some onlookers hanging out of the offices of the headquarters of national newspapers. Phillips and Phillips, *Windrush: The Irresistible Rise*, pp. 323–48.
32. Other eye-catching slogans were, 'End Racist Attacks Now!' or 'Blood Ah Go Run If Justice No Come!', Phillips and Phillips, *Windrush: The Irresistible Rise*, pp. 323–48. The community was offended by the lack of official expression of sympathy from the government or any public figure. At around the same time, a fire that broke out at a discothèque in Dublin, killing young white partygoers, brought forth condolences from the Prime Minister and members of the royal family. This was not the case for the 14 black people who died in the New Cross fire.
33. This organisation drew on the tradition of community 'self-help groups' of the past.
See, James, Winston, and Harris, Clive (eds), *Inside Babylon, The Caribbean Diaspora in Britain* (London, 1993); Sivanandan, Ambalavaner, *From Resistance to Rebellion, Asian and Afro-Caribbean Struggles in Britain* (London, 1986).
34. Phillips and Phillips, *Windrush: The Irresistible Rise*, p. 346.
35. Individuals such as Sybil Phoenix, Ros Howells, John La Rose, Darcus Howe and Russell Proffitt came to public prominence through their work supporting the community at this time.
36. Goulbourne, Harry, 'Africa and the Caribbean in Caribbean Consciousness and Action in Britain', *The David Nicholls Memorial Lectures*, No. 2 (Oxford, 2000), pp. 1–53.
37. Interview with Russell Proffitt, London, 18 November 2003.
38. This individual wishes to remain anonymous.
39. *West Indian World*, 2 August 1973, p. 69.
40. Bod.MSS.AAM 13, *Annual Report*, October 1979–September 1980, p. 20.
41. *Ibid.*, pp. 19–20.
42. *Ibid.*
43. *Ibid.*
44. Alex Pascal presented the programme for 14 years from 1974 to 1988. The recordings of these BBC radio 'Black Londoners' broadcasts can be accessed at the British Library Sound Archive in London.
45. Interview with Alex Pascal, London, 30 September 2002.
46. *Ibid.*
47. Bod.MSS.AAM 13, *Annual Report*, October 1981–September 1982, p. 23.
48. *Ibid.*

Five hundred black workers were sacked by a subsidiary of Rowntree Mackintosh in South Africa. They were dismissed after they had struck in

- support of three workers sacked in circumstances that would be illegal in most countries. The Rowntree management in South Africa refused to recognise the workers' union, the South African Allied Workers Union. The AAM campaign picketed and leafleted Rowntree Mackintosh workers and management in Britain, with a week of action and a limited boycott of Rowntree products.
49. Bod.MSS.AAM 13, *AAM Annual Report*, 1982–3, p. 23; 1984–5, p. 29. For references to sport and the black community in previous years see: 1976–7, p. 20; 1980–1, p. 20.
 50. Despite appeals from the AAM, the British government refused to support this campaign. See, Bod.MSS.AAM 780, 'Foreign and Commonwealth Office 1982–84, 19 February 1982, Richard Luce MP to Robert Hughes'.
 51. Interview with Christabel Gurney, London, 30 April 2002.
 52. Ibid.
 53. Bod.MSS.AAM 108, 'Black Solidarity Committee Leaflets, 1988–92.'
 54. Such as Russell Proffitt in the London borough of Lewisham, and Ben Bousquet in the London borough of Kensington & Chelsea. See AAM references to these zones in, Bod.MSS.AAM 13, *Annual Report*, October 1982–September 1983, p. 23.
 55. Bod.MSS.AAM 13, *Annual Report*, October 1979–September 1980, p. 20.
 56. Ibid., Oct 1982–Sept *Annual Report*, 1983, p. 23.
 57. Bod.MSS.AAM 13, October 1984–September 1985, p. 29.
 58. Interview with Ben Bousquet, London, 27 May 2004.
 59. Ibid., Bousquet, interview. Bod.MSS.AAM 13, *Annual Report*, October 1984–September 1985, pp. 29–30.
 60. Bod.MSS.AAM 13, *Annual Report*, 1986/1987, 'Carols for Liberation', p. 33.
 61. Bod.MSS.AAM 13, *Annual Report*, October 1983–September 1984, p. 28. According to Ben Bousquet, The Mangrove Community Association based in west London was largely responsible for the huge turnout of black people at the Botha demonstration.
 62. Interview with Dame Jocelyn Barrow, London, 7 February 2004.
 63. Bod.MSS.AAM 13, *Annual Report*, October 1982–September 1983, p. 23.
 64. The Executive Committee was elected by the National Committee of the AAM to carry out the work of the AAM and met on a monthly basis. The National Committee was the policy-making branch of the AAM. The decision was taken at its AGM, 10–11 January 1987, and then the National Committee at its February meeting formally established the working party. The subsequent report was presented in October 1987.
 65. Bod.MSS.AAM 13, *Annual Report*, 1986/87, p. 33.
 66. Bod.MSS.AAM 107, 'General Correspondence 1988–93', 'Report of the Working Party on the Black and Ethnic Minority Communities', Dan Thea, October 1987.
 67. Interview with Dan Thea, London, 20 December 2004. Members of the working party were of Caribbean, Indian and Pakistani heritage. Participants were Paul Adams, Bernadette Fry, Buzz Johnson, Suresh Kamath, Munir Malik, Rekha Patel, Midge Purcell, Nirmal Roy and Alan Brooks, a white South

- African who acted as the minute taker of these meetings. Bod.MSS.AAM 107, 'General Correspondence 1988–93', 'Report of the Working Party'.
68. Members of the working party conducted discussions with local black and ethnic minority groups, local authority councillors, trade unionists and with the four new black MPs.
 69. Bod.MSS.AAM 13, *Annual Report*, 1986/1987, p. 33. Bernie Grant was vice-chair of the parliamentary Labour Party anti-apartheid group in Westminster. Grant was also chair of the Parliamentary Black Caucus launched on 1 April 1989; 200 people attended a workshop on South Africa. Interview with Sharon Grant, London, 27 April 2002.
 70. Bod.MSS.AAM 13, *Annual Report*, 1986/1987, p. 33.
 71. Interview with Lee Jasper, London, 10 October 2002.
 72. Bod.MSS.AAM 103, 'Report of the Working Party on the Black and Ethnic Minorities Community', NC/Sept 87/7, p. 15.
 73. *Ibid.*, p. 8.
 74. The recommendations became known as 'Resolution 27', at the AAM's Annual General Meeting in November 1988.
 75. Bod.MSS.AAM 13, *Annual Report*, 1987/88, p. 39.
 76. Bod.MSS.AAM 103, NC/Sept 87/7, p. 15.
 77. Interview with Suresh Kamath, London, 14 July 2003, AAM member and member of the National Committee, vice-chair of BEM then chair, member of Executive Committee of the AAM.
 78. Interview with Lela Kogbara, London, 27 March 2002.
 79. Interview with Chitra Karve, London, 10 April 2002.
 80. Just over 130 names were on the original invitation list but more turned up. Many organisations were represented: the ANC, End Loans to Southern Africa, the Society of Black Lawyers, *Jagaran* Newspaper, St Lucia Association, National Union of Public Employees, National Steel Band Association, National Black Caucus, Kiss FM, Turkish Community Centre, Health Visitors Assoc., Mangrove Community Association, Northampton AA, Lambeth AA, Hackney AA, Mozambique Embassy, AAM, SWAPO, SAN-ROC and Gandhi Foundation. Bod.MSS.AAM 107, 'General Correspondence, 1988–93', 'Black and Ethnic Minorities Committee', 6 October 1989.
 81. Southern African exiles included Shapua Kaukungua – SWAPO, Mendi Msimang – ANC, Billy Masethla – ANC, Wally Serote – ANC, Essop Pahad – ANC, Martin Mabiletsa.
 82. Bod.MSS.AAM 107, 'General Correspondence, 1988–93', 'Black and Ethnic Minorities Committee', 6 October 1989; Bod.MSS.AAM 104, Black Solidarity Committee Minutes and Papers 1988–93', 'BEM Minutes 15 June, 1989'.
 83. Bod.MSS.AAM 103, 'Report of the Working Party', p. 16.
 84. *Ibid.*, p. 16.
 85. Interview with Onyekachi Wambu, London, 16 June 2002.
 86. Interview with Stuart Hall, London, 13 June 2002. See, Hall, S., 'The AAM and the Race-ing of Britain', paper presented at the Anti-Apartheid Movement, a

- 40-Year Perspective, South Africa House, London 25–6 June 1999. <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/aam/symposium.html>
87. During the twentieth century, the experiences of black intellectuals such as C.L.R. James, George Padmore, Claudia Jones and others with the British Communist Party demonstrated this tendency.
 88. Interview with Mike Terry, London, 18 December 2000.
 89. Interview with Ethel De Keyser, London, 3 March 2001.
 90. Interview with George Johannes, London, 19 February 2002; Interview with Glenroy Watson, London, 1 February 2001.
 91. Interview with Stuart Hall, London, 13 June 2002.
 92. Bod.MSS.AAM 103, 'Report of the Working Party', pp. 16–17.
 93. Interview with Suresh Kamath, London, 14 July 2003
 94. Bod.MSS.AAM 103, 'Report of the Working Party', p. 16.
 95. Interview with Glenroy Watson, London, 1 February 2001. See, Dabydeen, David, Gilmore, John, and Jones, Cecily (eds), *The Oxford Companion to Black British History* (Oxford, 2007), p. 361.
 96. Ibid.
 97. Bod.MSS.AAM 104, 'Report of the Working Party', pp. 16–17.
 98. Bod.MSS.AAM 107, 'Correspondence 1988–93', Mike Terry to BEM committee, 14 January 1992; See, Chitra Karve to Mike Terry, 16 January 1992; Bod.MSS.AAM 872, 'Anti-Racist Alliance 1991–1994'. The Anti-Racist Alliance was founded in 1991 to redress the rise in right-wing activity against non-whites and migrants to Britain. It was black-led and aimed to fight racism and anti-Semitism, organising local and national campaigns against racist murders, attacks and harassment.
 99. Bod.MSS.AAM 779, 'Prime Minister's Correspondence 1967–88', Mike Terry to Margaret Thatcher, 15 February 1981.
 100. Bod.MSS.AAM 107, 'Correspondence 1988–93', 'Agenda Item on the Future of the AAM', Chitra Karve to AAM National Committee, 6 June 1992.
 101. Minty was a founder member of the AAM having moved from South Africa to Britain to study in 1958. He served as honorary secretary of the AAM from 1962 to 1995.
 102. Fieldhouse, *Anti-Apartheid*, p. 346.
 103. Interview with Mike Terry, London, 18 December 2000.
 104. Alan Brooks correspondence, 20 October 2002. Alan Brooks, a white South African émigré was a member of the Executive Committee and secretary for the BEM Committee until he was removed due to the objections of black members. Brooks's world of white South African exiles is chronicled in: Driver, Charles, J., 'Used to be Great Friends', in *Granta* 80 – *The Group* (Winter 2002), pp. 7–27.
 105. Fieldhouse, *Anti-Apartheid*, pp. 346–7.
 106. Shukra, Kalbir, *The Changing Pattern of Black Politics in Britain* (London, 1998).
 107. See the following chapters for discussion of black groups critical of the AAM.

108. Interview with Mike Terry, London, 18 December 2000.
109. Robert Hughes, Richard Caborn and Neil Kinnock were all members of the British Parliament.
110. Bod.MSS.AAM 104, 'Black Solidarity Committee (formerly Black and Ethnic Minorities Committee) Minutes and Papers 1988–93', 'Black and Ethnic Minorities Working Party Report on First meeting', 29 May 1987, pp. 2–3; Bod.MSS.AAM 107, 'General Correspondence 1988–1993', 'Report of the Working Party on Black and Ethnic Minorities Committee', September 1987, pp. 2–3.
111. Interview with Bini Brown, Birmingham, 24 March 2001.
112. During interviews Robert Hughes and Mike Terry dismissed this accusation as incorrect.
113. Interview with George Johannes, London, 19 February 2002. He recalls that ANC representatives shared the platform with race equality organisations such as the Greater London Council and the Commission of Race Equality. They also attended events organised by less well-known black community groups such as the Mangrove and others based in the heart of black community life in Brixton, Notting Hill and Hackney. Representatives took part in Black History Month events where parallels between the respective struggles were highlighted.
114. Ibid.
115. Interview with a person who wishes to remain anonymous. Gives an example of the BEM being approached by the organisers of the Music of Black Origin (MOBO) awards to invite Nelson Mandela to attend the televised award ceremony and receive a prize in 1991. Similarly, the BEM was approached by black community workers in Brixton to help facilitate Mandela's visit there.
116. Interview with Suresh Kamath, London, 14 July 2003.
117. Interview with Chitra Karve, London, 10 April 2002.
118. Interview with Glenroy Watson, London, 1 February 2001.
119. Bod.MSS.AAM 104, Black Solidarity Committee (formerly Black and Ethnic Minorities Committee) Minutes and Papers 1988–93. See names of attendees to committee meetings detailed in the minutes and listings of total members.
120. Bod.MSS.AAM 13, *Annual Report*, 1987/88, p. 39.
121. The Mandela birthday tribute was organised by a group calling itself 'Artists Against Apartheid'. It was held at Wembley Stadium on 11 June 1988, spanning over ten hours and was broadcast by the BBC and radio, including stations in at least 60 countries worldwide. Nelson Mandela's struggle against racial injustice and that of the victims of apartheid was brought into the homes of millions; £1.2 million was raised and divided between the AAM and seven agencies in charge of children's projects in southern Africa. See, Bod.MSS.AAM 1929–30, 'Nelson Mandela 70th Birthday Tribute concert, 11 June 1988'.
122. This was a time of high AAM activity; there were various such marches organised during 1988: a 590-mile Freedom March started in Glasgow and

- finished in London. In July in London there was a Mandela Freedom Rally held in Hyde Park. See Fieldhouse, *Anti-Apartheid*, p. 122.
123. Bod.MSS.AAM 105, 'Black Solidarity Seminar, Mar 1990', held in Brixton Village St Matthews, Brixton Hill, London.
 124. Interview with Sharon Grant, London, 27 April 2002.
 125. Grant did visit the Prime Minister in person to reiterate this demand and gained her assurance that her government would contribute through financial aid to train South Africans.
 126. For example: the West Indian Ex-Servicemen's Association, the Black Unity and Freedom Party, Afro-Caribbean Student Societies, and the Singapore and Malaysian British Association. There was a speech by Rose Motsepe, the chairperson of the ANC women's section based in the UK, and workshops were held to follow through issues raised in the speeches by Billy Masethla, ANC deputy chief representative and Matthew Oliphant, the representative of South Africa's biggest trade union congress – COSATU.
 127. Bod.MSS.AAM 105, 'Black Solidarity Seminar, March 1990'.
 128. Bod.MSS.AAM 105, 'Black Solidarity Seminar, March 1990', 'Call to Action! Report to Executive Committee and National Committee'.
 129. Bod.MSS.AAM 105, 'Black Solidarity Seminar, March 1990', 'The Way Forward', March 1990; Bod.MSS. AAM 104, 'Committee Minute, 26 July 1990'.
 130. Ibid.
 131. Bod.MSS.AAM 104, 'Black Solidarity Committee, Speech of Nelson Mandela, Deputy President of the ANC to the Black activists, Park Lane Hotel', London 3 July 1990.
 132. Interview with Glenroy Watson, London, 1 February 2001.
 133. Bod.MSS.AAM 104, 'Bankie Proposals'.
 134. Interview with Glenroy Watson, London, 1 February 2001.
 135. Bod.MSS.AAM 104, 'Black Solidarity Committee Minutes', 27 March 1991.
 136. Interview with Glenroy Watson, London, 1 February 2001. Watson was an active trade unionist and anti-racist campaigner as well as being a member of the AAM and BEM. As a child of West Indian parents he describes the emotional impact of travelling to southern Africa and seeing for himself the ravages of racism and poverty on its people. He visited Namibia and Mozambique in the early 1990s and was encouraged by the resilience and determination shown by the people. See, Bod.MSS.AAM 2204, *Anti-Apartheid News*, July/August 1991, 'Black Solidarity!'.
 137. Bod.MSS.AAM 2204, *Anti-Apartheid News* 1989–94, 'The Last Battle?' and 'A Shared Legacy of Racism', July/August 1991, p. 7.
 138. Bod.MSS.AAM 104, 'Black Solidarity Committee Minutes', 27 March 1991.
 139. Box 6, 'PAC London Mission, Correspondence, AAM (Lon) 1991–1993 (FH)', 'Agenda item on the future of the AAM', NC/May 92/5b, Chitra Karve BEM member to National Committee, 8 May 1992. PAC papers, University of Fort Hare.

140. Formal negotiations in South Africa started in December 1991, under the umbrella of CODESA – Nelson Mandela's inspired all-party congress to negotiate an interim constitution and the creation of a constituent assembly. There were representatives from 19 parties barring the Conservative Party and the Pan-Africanist Congress. See, Barber, James, *South Africa in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford, 1999), p. 291.
141. Bod.MSS.AAM 106, 'Education for Liberation Conference, 3 Apr 1993'.
142. Participants at the conference on 3 April 1993 were: Stuart Hall, Gus John, Paul Gilroy, Chris Mullard, Sivanandan, Ngugi Wa Thiongo, Moliphe Pheto, Lauretta Ngcobo.
143. Bod.MSS.AAM 106, 'Education for Liberation', 'The Report'. In order to create linkages it was proposed that student-to-student links should be encouraged: letter writing, material exchanges, links between student unions, youth exchanges and professional contacts made.
144. Ibid.
145. Bod.MSS.AAM 104, 'Black Solidarity Committee (formerly Black and Ethnic Minorities Committee) Minutes and Papers 1988–93', 'Draft proposals for visit of the ANC to Britain', 18 April 1992.
146. This took place 27–8 June 1992.
147. Mandela first met the parents of the murdered teenager in May 1993. Afterwards he declared that the tragedy reminded him of the commonplace white brutality against Africans in South Africa 'where black lives were cheap'. The meeting was widely credited with having provided extra impetus to the police investigation into the case. See, Pilkington, E. 'Mandela Meets Family of London Stabbing Victim', *Guardian* (London), 7 May 1993.
148. Bod.MSS.AAM 107, 'Nelson Mandela's visit to London 3 May 1993'. Lee Jasper to the BEM regarding Nelson Mandela's visit, 20 April 1993.
149. Interview with Lela Kogbara, London, 4 May 2002.
150. Interview with Glenroy Watson, London, 1 February 2001.
151. Alan Brooks correspondence, 20 October 2002.
152. Bod.MSS.AAM 107, 'General Correspondence', Southwark Anti-Apartheid Group to Mike Terry, 26 July 1990.
153. Ibid., Sanjay Patel BEM representative to the Executive Committee, 13 October 1990.
154. Ibid.
155. Bod.MSS.AAM 107, 'General Correspondence', BEM to Alan Brooks, 23 August 1990.
156. Suresh Kamath, Glenroy Watson, Chitra Karve and Lela Kogbara, members of the BEM, were appointed onto the Executive of the AAM at this time.
157. Interview with Glenroy Watson, London, 1 February 2001.
158. Interview with Suresh Kamath, London, 14 July 2003.
159. Bod.MSS.AAM 107, 'General Correspondence', Alan Brooks to Chitra Karve, 21 July 1990.

160. This was ascertained from interviews with Mike Terry, Glenroy Watson, Lela Kogbara and Chitra Karve.
161. Bod.MSS.AAM 32–3, 'AGM Papers 1990', 'Report to the 1990 AGM of the AAM Oct 1989–Oct 1990'.
162. Bod.MSS.AAM 2376, 'Discussion on Future Roles of the AAM, 1991–4', see, 'Consultative Document on the Future of the Movement', 7 May 1994. Bod.MSS.AAM 41, 'Papers of Joint AGM & Founding Meeting of Action for Southern Africa (ACTSA)', Oct 1994. The new organisation became known as 'Action for Southern Africa', former BEM members such as Lela Kogbara joined the new organisation.
163. Alan Brooks correspondence, 20 October 2002.
164. Box 34, 'ANC London Mission Folder 109', 'Mandela Messages received 1990' (FH), Dr C. Singh, secretary of the Afro Caribbean and Asian Forum in Leicester, to Nelson Mandela, 14 February 1990.

Chapter 5 Partners in Protest, Black Solidarity with the Anti-Apartheid Struggle, 1970s–80s

1. Harris, Roxy, White, Sarah, and Beezmohun, Sharmilla (eds), *A Meeting of the Continents: The International Book Fair of Radical Black and Third World Books – Revisited History, Memories, Organization and Programmes 1982–1995* (London, 2005).
2. Bod.MSS.AAM 13, AAM *Annual Report*, October 1978–September 1979, 'Black Community', p. 19; AAM *Annual Report*, October 1979–September 1980, 'Black Community', p. 20.
3. Bod.MSS.AAM 13, AAM *Annual Report*, October 1981–September 1982, 'Black Community', p. 23; October 1982–September 1983, 'Black Community', p. 23; October 1983–September 1984, 'Black Community', p. 28; October 1984–September 1985, 'Black Community', p. 29; AAM *Annual Report*, 1985/86, 'Black Community', p. 32, AAM *Annual Report*, 1986/87, 'Black and Ethnic Minority', pp. 33–9; Bod.MSS.AAM 32–3, AGM Papers, AAM 30th Anniversary AGM, 'Report to the AGM October 1988–October 1989 Black and Ethnic Minorities'.
4. Layton-Henry, Zig, *The Politics of Race in Britain* (London, 1984), pp. 35–6.
5. Ibid.
6. Interview with William Trant OBE, London, 11 May 2005. See, Shukra, Kalbir, *The Changing Pattern of Black Politics in Britain* (London, 1998), pp. 10–14. The dangers of those times for black youths threatened by unsolicited violence at the hands of whites in the late 1950s is described in the memoirs of the author Mike Phillips in his *London Crossings: A Biography of Black Britain* (London, 2001). Conversely, from the opposite end of the scale growing up as a child of the fascist movement during the 1950s in Britain, see Grundy, Trevor, *Memoir of a Fascist Childhood, A Boy in Mosley's Britain* (London, 1998).

7. WISC pamphlet, 'The Social, Economic and Political Issues Which Gave Rise to WISC', n.d. Folder C, West Indian Standing Conference Papers, London.
8. Order of the British Empire (OBE), Member of the British Empire (MBE): these are honours granted by the British monarch to nominated individuals on the advice of the current government.
9. Wade, Tony, *How They Made a Million: The Dyke and Dryden Story* (London, 2001).
10. Goulbourne, Harry, 'The Contribution of West Indian Groups to British Politics', in *Black Politics in Britain* (Aldershot, 1990), pp. 95–114.
11. Interview with William Trant, London, 11 May 2005.
12. WISC pamphlet, 'The Social, Economic and Political Issues Which Gave Rise to WISC', n.d. Folder C, West Indian Standing Conference Papers, London. William Trant believes this statement was a fundamental principle that inspired the rationale of the Race Relations Act in 1965 and its subsequent revision in 1968 and 1976, which led to the creation of the Commission for Racial Equality. WISC was instrumental in providing advice on race legislation. See, Dabydeen, David, Gilmore, John, and Jones, Cecily (eds), *The Oxford Companion to Black British History* (Oxford, 2007), pp. 518–19.
13. Interview with William Trant, London, 11 May 2005.
14. *The Times*, 7 December 1964.
15. Hiro, Dilip, *Black British, White British: A History of Race Relations in Britain* (London, 1991), pp. 44–5.
16. Walters, Ronald, *Pan Africanism in the African Diaspora: An Analysis of Modern Afrocentric Political Movements* (Detroit, 1993), p. 172.
17. Bod.MSS.AAM 911, 'Organizations Working in Race Relations and Community Relations, 1968–73', See, 'Campaign Against Racial Discrimination Letter from the Chairman Dr David Pitt to Members', 1 March 1968. 'Proposals for CARD 1968 Programme and Organizational Development', 18 January 1968.
18. For CARD's history see, Shukra, Kalbir, *The Changing Pattern of Black Politics in Britain* (London, 1998); Walters, *Pan Africanism in the African Diaspora*, pp. 172–8.
19. Ibid.
20. WISC/Southern Africa Activities; Folder A, 'South Africa House Vigil and Demonstrations – 1. Saturday 26 June 1976', 'Report of the Incident/Statement of Mrs R. Singh'.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid.
24. 'WISC Southern Africa Activities Folder A', 'JA Hunte Welfare Officer of WISC to Hon Roy Jenkins at the Home Office, 1 July 1976'.
25. Police records of the details of internal discussions with the three police officers remain closed. In 1976 a police officer was disciplined for improper remarks during the WISC vigil outside South Africa House. No letter of apology was sent by the officers in question.

26. 'WISC Southern Africa Activities Folder A', 'JA Hunte to Roy Jenkins, 1 July 1976'.
27. The current director of WISC William Trant does not recall an official apology being made.
28. *West Indian World*, 9–15 July 1976. Later editions do not carry a reply from the Commissioner to the question posed in this issue.
29. 'WISC Southern Africa Activities Folder A', Home Office official C. Farrington to J.A. Hunte, 13 January 1977.
30. The 'insufficient evidence' argument from the office of the Director of Public Prosecutions has in the past and continues to frustrate many black families from pursuing action against the police. The critically acclaimed documentary *Injustice*, produced and directed by Ken Fero (Migrant Media, 2001), brings to light this darker side of the history of policing black communities in Britain.
31. 'WISC Southern Africa Activities Folder A', 'Report of the incident /Statement of Mrs R. Singh'.
32. Interview with William Trant, London, 11 May 2005.
33. 'WISC Southern Africa Activities Folder A', 'Farrington writing to JA Hunte, 13 Jan 1977'.
34. William Trant was the author of this 1976 report. See; 'WISC Southern Africa Activities Folder A'.
35. Parliamentary Debates (House of Commons), Vol. 865, 6 December 1973 (London, HMSO).
36. Ibid.
37. Interview with William Trant, London, 11 May 2005.
38. Alleyne, Brian, *Radicals Against Race: Black Activism and Cultural Politics* (Oxford, 2002), p. 31.
39. Interview with William Trant, London, 11 May 2005.
40. 'WISC Southern Africa Activities Folder A', 'Flyers/Posters/information sheets'.
41. Ibid.
42. Ibid.
43. Interview with William Trant, London, 11 May 2005.
44. Fieldhouse, *Anti-Apartheid*, p. 281.
45. Ibid., p. 279.
46. Bod.MSS.AAM 922, press statement, signed by Alan Books, 1989.
47. 'Minutes of Evidence Foreign Affairs Committee', 29 October 1985, Parliamentary Papers (Commons), Vol. 61–4, 1985–6 (London, HMSO).
48. Fieldhouse, *Anti-Apartheid*, p. 281.
49. WISC Southern Africa Activities Folder B, 'Friday 1st Jun 1984 – Vigil Sat 2nd Jun 1984 – Demonstrations'. Interview with William Trant, London, 11 May 2005.
50. 'WISC Southern Africa Activities Folder A & B', 'Flyers/Posters/information sheets'. A much used slogan reads, 'WISC says "No to Botha! No to Apartheid!"'
51. This press-release statement put out by WISC, under the heading 'WISC says "No to Botha! No to Apartheid!"' Emphasis present in the original. See, 'WISC Folder B'.

52. 'WISC Folder B', 'Press release/Statements'. Emphasis present in the original. WISC distributed this statement to many of its affiliated groups and sent them out to those on its mailing list. There was a tear-off slip encouraging recipients to sign it and send it as a protest to the Prime Minister at No. 10 Downing Street. Unfortunately, the organisation did not keep a record of the numbers distributed.
53. It was the substantial presence of black protesters, largely due to WISC's mobilisation of the community to attend the massive anti-Botha march and demonstration organised by the AAM that demonstrated to the AAM the large reservoir of potential black support.
54. 'WISC Folder B', 'press release/statements'.
55. Ibid.
56. Editorial, *Caribbean Times*, 18 May 1984.
57. Ibid.
58. *Guardian*, 'West Indians Protest at Botha Visit', writes Colin Brown, 12 May 1984.
59. 'WISC Folder B', Russell J. Phillips to W. Trant, chairman of WISC, n.d. 1984.
60. 'WISC Folder B', Official from FCO Southern African Department, David Carter, writing to the secretary of WISC, 2 July 1984.
61. *The Times*, 29 May 1985. The advert cost £3,000. Within WISC's papers, no details remain of the financial contribution made by the organisation. In fact, there are no account sheets that detail the donations or financial contribution the organisation gave to southern African causes. There remains, however, a letter dated 17 May 1985 from the chairperson of a Namibia support committee asking for a financial contribution to SWAPO.
62. Bod.MSS.AAM 13, 'AAM *Annual Report* 1984/1985'. See section on the black community. At a planning meeting a document was presented entitled, 'Report to Emergency Mobilising Meeting – Saturday 26th May', which examined ways of galvanising the public to protest against Botha's visit. The meeting was held in the council chamber, Camden Town Hall.
63. WISC Headquarters on Westminster Bridge road holds photographs of the gathering of the individuals who attended the services. The lists of invitees as well as those who sent apologies and could not attend the services can be viewed.
64. In the 1970s St Martin-in-the-Fields Anglican Church in central London hosted a seminar and called on the World Council of Churches to give greater support to the ANC's quest for freedom in South Africa.
65. WISC/southern Africa activities; Folder C, 'South Africa 1970s/1980s; letters, newspaper clippings, invitations, programmes and order of service for St Martin-in-the-Fields'.
66. 'WISC Folder B', Peter Eyoto to William Trant, 23 July 1985.
67. 'WISC Folder B', Anne Jonathan, secretary to Canon Geoffrey Brown, to William Trant, 15 January 1986.
68. 'WISC Folder B', William Trant to Lord Pitt, 5 September 1986.
69. King James Bible, Book of Revelation, Chapter 21, verse 4.

70. The passage read during the service was taken from the book of Revelation, Chapter 21, 1–8.
71. 'WISC Folder B', William Trant to Revd Dr Wilfred Wood, 13 June 1986.
72. 'WISC Folder B', Bishop Wilfred Wood of Croydon to William Trant, 18 June 1986.
73. During an interview with WISC Director William Trant, he could not provide an estimate of the sum raised during these events. However, he clearly stated that monies were passed to the ANC.
74. 'WISC Folder C', see, the invitation on 10 March 1988; the briefing was held at the University of London Union in Malet Street.
75. Interview with Sybil Phoenix, London, 15 May 2004.
76. Interview with William Trant, London, 11 May 2005. Visitors included Oliver Tambo and other ANC representatives exiled in London.
77. Dr Motlana was a general practitioner and chairman of the Soweto Civic Association. He was a member of the Transvaal executive branch of the UDF in Soweto. Through his work Motlana improved the health services in black townships and raised funds for black medical scholarships. During the tour he also visited the Citizens Advice Bureau, Conservative Central Office, the British Council, Labour Party, CRE, TGWU, the BBC (Africa service), BP and met members of Parliament. See, 'WISC Folder B', 'FCO-Central Office of Information Dr Motlana visit to London 9–20 September 1985; Bod.MSS. AAM 831, South African and other visitors to the Foreign Office, 1978–94.
78. Interview with Arif Ali, 14 September 2003; Interview with Lionel Morrison 15 June 2004.
79. Interview with William Trant, London, 11 May 2005.
80. 'WISC Folder B', 'FCO-Central Office of Information Dr Motlana visit to London 9–20 September 1985'.
81. Interview with William Trant, London, 11 May 2005.
82. Ibid.
83. Alleyne, Brian, *Radicals Against Race* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 51–3. 'Obituary, John La Rose', *Wasafiri* 49, Winter 2006, pp. 65–7.
84. Coard, Bernard, *How the West Indian Child is Made Educationally Sub-normal in the British School System: The Scandal of the Black Child in Schools in Britain* (London, 1971); Carter, Trevor, *Shattering Illusions: West Indians in British Politics* (London, 1986).
85. Alleyne, *Radicals Against Race*, p. 54.
86. Ibid.
87. Christian, Mark, 'The Politics of Black Presence in Britain and Black Male Exclusion in the British Education System', *Journal of Black Studies*, 35, 3 (January 2005), pp. 327–46.
88. Alleyne, *Radicals Against Race*, p. 56.
89. Ibid., pp. 55–6.
90. Bogle *L'Overture* was opened in 1968, inspired by the campaigns of Walter Rodney when he was banned from re-entering Jamaica after a visit to Canada to

a black writers' congress. Rodney was in London between 1963 and 1966, where he received his PhD from SOAS, University of London.

91. Another key figure was Darcus Howe, nephew of C.L.R. James, who became editor of *Race Today*. This publication emerged out of the Institute of Race Relations after a split. Howe formed the 'Race Today Collective' based in Brixton in 1973. When the Radical Book Fair started, three black-led publishing houses were already established: Race Today Collective was already 10 years old, Bogle L'Ouverture was 13 years old and New Beacon Books was 15 years old.
92. Harris et al. (eds), *A Meeting of the Continents*, p. 1.
93. Ibid., pp. 1–2; See also, Walmsley, Anne, *The Caribbean Artists Movement 1966–1972* (London, 1992).
94. Harris et al. (eds), *A Meeting of the Continents* pp. 452, 484–5. Langa was the ANC's cultural representative in Europe, Mchunu was the editor of *Isivivane – Journal of Letters and Arts in Africa and the Diaspora*.
95. Ibid., pp. 263, 346–7. This was the case for the sixth book fair, the eighth book fair in 1989 and the ninth book fair in 1990.
96. The International Defence and Aid Fund attended the ninth book fair in 1990; see Harris et al. (eds), *A Meeting of the Continents*, pp. 252, 314; for details on Harare Publishing House in 1987, *ibid.*, p. 270; Zimbabwe Publishing House, *ibid.*, p. 314; Polypotton in 1986, *ibid.*, p. 238.
97. Harris et al., *A Meeting of the Continents*, p. 231.
98. Ibid., pp. 242–4.
99. Ibid., p. 233.
100. Ibid., p. 391.
101. Alleyne, *Radicals Against Race*, p. 60.
102. MCH 101, Dennis Goldberg, 'Black Groups Local-Black Parents Movement'. Mayibuye PAC/ ANC Papers, University of the Western Cape, Bellville, South Africa. M. La Rose writing to the ANC, 14 July 1986. The meeting took place on 23 July 1986 at Stroud Green community centre in north London. The BPM organised boycotts of British firms that traded with South Africa or sold produce from there. The picket of Tesco supermarket branch at Stroud Green Road lasted for two years. Pickets stood outside on Friday evenings and Saturdays during the busiest periods of the store's trading hours.
103. MCH 101, Dennis Goldberg, 'Black Groups Local', Michael La Rose to ANC HQ London, 14 July 1986.
104. Ibid.
105. MCH 101, Dennis Goldberg, 'Black Groups Local'. 'Leaflets'.
106. MCH 101, Dennis Goldberg, 'Black Groups Local', Tesco HQ to BPM, 19 February 1986.
107. Interview with Spartacus R, London, 23 March 2001.
108. Brown, John, *Policing by Multi-Racial Consent: The Handsworth Experience* (London, 1982); Lambert, John R., *Crime, Police, and Race Relations: A Study in Birmingham* (London, 1970). In Birmingham, the main issue was the

harsh treatment that members of the community experienced at the hands of the police.

109. Interview with Bini Brown, London, 24 March 2001. A long-established community activist, Brown was also director of the Birmingham Afro-Caribbean Self-Help Group.
110. Interview with Vanley Burke, Birmingham, 16 October 2002. The Vanley Burke collection of photographs is held at Birmingham Central Library.
111. Nkrumah, Kwame, *Neo-Colonialism, The Last Stage of Imperialism* (London, 1965).
112. Walters, Ronald, *Pan Africanism in the African Diaspora*, p. 189.
113. *Black Voice*, London, 4, 1973, cited in Walters, *Pan Africanism*, p. 189.
114. *Ibid.*, p. 189.
115. *Ibid.*, pp. 189–90. Ron Philips (1935–98) was the older brother of author Mike Phillips, and Trevor Phillips, head of the Commission for Equalities and Human Rights.
116. Kwame Ture was formerly known as Stokely Carmichael (1941–98). His decision to change his name reflected his admiration of the pan-Africanists, Kwame Nkrumah and Sekou Toure of Guinea. See links he draws between Africans in the diaspora and those of the continent. Box 35, 'PAC London—Topical All African Peoples Revolutionary Party 1982–1989', PAC papers, University of Fort Hare. n.d. Kwame Ture representing the Central committee of the A-APRP (US) writing to ALD organisers in London, letter probably authored in the early 1980s.
117. Interview with Bini Brown, London, 24 March 2001. More details of activist groups in Birmingham, for example the Marcus Garvey Foundation's ideology and involvement in ALD, can be found in chapter 5, in the PhD thesis of author.
118. *Ibid.*, Box 38, 'Agenda/Objectives'.
119. Interview with Bini Brown, London, 24 March 2001. Brown declined to disclose the contacts through which clothes and money were sent to southern Africa.
120. Box 6, PAC London Mission, 'PAC London Correspondence Afro-Caribbean Society (GB) 1976–80'. Letters, 5 January, 14 January and 29 January 1976. PAC papers, University of Fort Hare.
121. *Ibid.*, Afro-Caribbean Society Birmingham to PAC, 5 March, 6 August 1976.
122. *Ibid.*, Afro-Caribbean Society Southsea to PAC, 2 February 1979.
123. Thomas, Scott, *The Diplomacy of Liberation: The Foreign Relations of the ANC since 1960* (London, 1996), p. 46.
124. Meer, Fatima, *Higher Than Hope: A Biography of Nelson Mandela* (Harmondsworth, 1990), p. 197.
125. Interview with Spartacus R, London, 23 March 2001.
126. Interview with Bini Brown, Birmingham, 24 March 2001.
127. Box 6, PAC London Mission, V. Mngaza to Bini Brown, 30 July 1976.
128. *Ibid.*, n.d. 1979. Aniel Madire to PAC office in London.
129. *Ibid.*, Afro-Caribbean Self-Help Group, Birmingham to PAC in London, 22 September 1976.

130. Ibid., Vuyani Mngaza of PAC to Bini Brown, 10 June 1977. See also letter, 24 July 1980.
131. Ibid., 24 July 1980.
132. Ibid., Jackie Thompson of the Afro-Caribbean Self-Help Group, Birmingham, to PAC in London, 12 July 1982.
133. Box 38, 'PAC London, Topical Grassroots Groups 1982–1990'. See letter; 13 January 1986.
134. Ibid., 'NCCAL, Draft Aims, Rules and Policy Position'.
135. Box 35, 'PAC London-Topical-All African Peoples Revolutionary Party'. Pan-African Congress Movement with a bold letter heading, 'Africa for Africans at Home and Abroad', to PAC in London, 7 April 1989.
136. Ibid., ALD document dated 17 April 1989.
137. Ibid.
138. Ibid., Afro-Caribbean Self-Help Group to PAC, 1 March 1990.
139. Thomas, *The Diplomacy of Liberation*, p. 48.
140. MCH 101, 'Dennis Goldberg, Black Groups Local', R. Williams of the Afro-Caribbean Self Help Organisation and Pan-African Congress, Birmingham, writing to the ANC office in London, 10 May 1985.
141. Ibid., Solly Smith, ANC, to Mr Akuso of the Pan-African Organisation in Kingsland Road, Hackney, London, 12 July 1986.
142. Ibid.
143. Ibid., J.S. Charter, UK representative of the Maurice Bishop Patriotic Movement (UK), New Eltham, London to Solly Smith, 31 December 1984.
144. Interview with George Johannes, London, 19 February 2002.
145. MCH 101, 'Dennis Goldberg, Black Groups Local', invitation sent to the ANC to an event held at the offices of the newspaper *Caribbean Times* on behalf of Mr George Louison and other members of the Maurice Bishop Patriotic Movement, 7 February 1985. Interview with Onyekachi Wambu, London, 16 June 2002; interview with Arif Ali, 14 September 2003.
146. Plaatje, Thami K., 'The PAC's Internal Underground Activities, 1960–1980' in South African Democracy Education Trust, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa Volume 2 1970–1980*, pp. 685–701; *ibid.*, Plaatje, Thami K., 'The PAC in Exile', pp. 703–46.
147. Ndlovu, Sifiso, M., 'The ANC's Diplomacy and International Relations', in South African Democracy Education Trust, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa Volume 2*, pp. 615–67.

Chapter 6 Black Radical Solidarity with the Anti-Apartheid Struggle, 1970–90

1. Fryer, Peter, *Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain* (London, 1984); Hoyles, Martin, *The Axe Laid to the Root: The Story of Robert Wedderburn* (London, 2004); Ramdin, Ron, *Re-Imaging Britain: 500 Years of Black and Asian History* (London, 1999).

2. Interview with Lela Kogbara, London, 27 March 2002; interview with Marc Wadsworth, London, 7 October 2003; interview with Lee Jasper, London, 10 October 2002.
3. *The Times*, 12 February 1965.
4. His performance was mesmerising to his listeners, according to the account in Bethune, Lebert, 'Malcolm X in Europe', in Clarke, John H. (ed.), *Malcolm X: The Man and His Times* (New York, 1969), pp. 231–3.
5. Goldman, Peter, *The Death and Life of Malcolm X* (New York, 1965), p. 278.
6. Walters, Ronald, *Pan Africanism in the African Diaspora: An Analysis of Modern Afrocentric Political Movements* (Detroit, 1993), p. 179.
7. The Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC 'Snick') was a major group in the Civil Rights Movement in America during the 1960s. It was formed in April 1960 out of student gatherings led by Ella Baker at Shaw University in North Carolina. SNCC members were the main participants in 'freedom rides', the march on Washington in 1963, and 'Freedom Summer' in Mississippi. Later in the 1960s, Stokely Carmichael took over leadership of SNCC and emphasised black power and opposition against the Vietnam War. In 1969, SNCC changed its name to the Student National Coordinating Committee to reflect the widening of its nationally focused objective. See Hogan, Wesley, C., *Many Minds, One Heart: SNCC's Dream For a New America* (North Carolina, 2007).
8. Carmichael, Stokely, *Stokely Speaks: Black Power Back to Pan Africanism* (New York, 1971), pp. 78–9.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 85.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 87.
11. Carmichael, *Stokely Speaks*, p. 89.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 88.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 97.
14. Afterwards, Carmichael left Britain for North Vietnam on 24 July. See, *The Times*, London, 25 July 1967.
15. Michael de Freitas changed his name to Michael X. A Trinidadian by birth, he played an important part in black radical politics in Britain during the 1960s. See, Walters, *Pan Africanism*, pp. 184–6. Indo-Guyanese Roy Sawh was a veteran of the Black Power Movement in Britain during the 1960s and 1970s. After clashes with the police and criminal justice system, he formed Black Rights (UK) in the 1980s, which campaigned for a Bill of Rights for citizens to have their rights enshrined in statute. See James, Winston, and Harris, Clive, *Inside Babylon: The Caribbean Diaspora in Britain* (London, 1993), pp. 275–9; Sawh, Roy, *From Where I Stand* (London, 1987).
16. Egbuna, Obi, *Destroy This Temple: The Voice of Black Power in Britain* (London, 1971), p. 16. Obi Egbuna, in April 1968, formed a chapter of the Black Panther Party in Britain.
17. Walters, *Pan Africanism*, p. 181.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 182.

19. *The Times*, London, 22 February 1970.
20. Walters, *Pan Africanism*, p. 182.
21. What remains of these publications are currently held at the library in the Institute of Race Relations in London and the British Newspaper Library in Colindale, London.
22. Carmichael, *Stokely Speaks*, p. 130.
23. *The Black Voice*, London, 4 (1973), cited in Walters, *Pan Africanism*, p. 188.
24. Walters, *Pan Africanism*, p. 196.
25. James Baldwin and Dick Gregory spoke to the West Indian students at the West Indian Student Centre in London in 1969. Taking questions from the floor he sketched the historical legacies and contemporary struggles that African-Americans and Caribbean people faced in the US and British context, and ways to overcome this. See, 'Baldwin's Nigger: James Baldwin in conversation with Dick Gregory', in *Pressure; Baldwin's Nigger, 2 films by Horace Ové* (BFI Productions, 1976), DVD, 164 mins.
26. Goulbourne, Harry, 'Africa and the Caribbean in Caribbean Consciousness and Action in Britain', *The David Nicholls Memorial Lectures No.2* (Oxford, 2000), p. 153.
27. Walters, *Pan Africanism*, p. 196.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 166.
29. Box 35, 'PAC London – Topical, All African People's Revolutionary Party 1988', see pamphlet; 'The All-African People's Revolutionary Party, Black Consciousness Movement of Azania, National Union of Eritrean Workers in North America and Pan-Africanist Congress of Azania'. PAC papers, University of Fort Hare.
30. Ahmed Sékou Touré (1922–84) was President of the Republic of Guinea from independence in 1958 to his death.
31. Box 35, 'PAC London – Topical, All African People's Revolutionary Party 1988', see pamphlet; 'The All-African People's Revolutionary Party, Black Consciousness Movement of Azania, National Union of Eritrean Workers in North America and Pan-Africanist Congress of Azania'. PAC papers, University of Fort Hare.
32. Box 35, 'PAC London – Topical All African People's Revolutionary Party', A-APRP Washington, letter to A-APRP in London, 14 October 1986.
33. The US security services undoubtedly monitored the activities of radical groups. Through its Counter Intelligence Program (COINTELPRO) it aimed to neutralise the activities of groups and leaders that threatened the status quo. See, Blackstock, Nelson, *Cointelpro: The FBI's Secret War on Political Freedom* (3rd edn) (New York, 1998); Churchill, Ward, and Wall, Jim, V., *The Cointelpro Papers: Documents From the FBI's Secret Wars Against Dissent in the United States* (2nd edn) (London, 2002).
34. Box 35, 'PAC London – Topical All African People's Revolutionary Party', A-APRP London to PAC headquarters in London, 20 October 1986.
35. *Ibid.*

36. Ibid.
37. Ibid., Samora Sobukwe, PAC, writing to A-APRP, 19 May 1988. Sobukwe notes that the ALD event in London that year would be jointly organised by the A-APRP, and the Africa Liberation Committee. PAC accepted an invitation to speak on developments in the struggle. PAC shared a platform with the Black Consciousness Movement on the day.
38. PAC received acknowledgement and support from the radical independent leaders of Ghana and Guinea, during its inaugural meeting Kwame Nkrumah and Sékou Touré sent greetings, while the ANC's non-racialism was out of step with the militant and more racially exclusive Pan-Africanism of the newly independent African nations and their supporters in the wider black diaspora.
39. Thomas, *The Diplomacy of Liberation*, p. 44. The Casablanca Group was established in 1961 and incorporated Egypt led by Nasser, Ghana led by Nkrumah, Touré's Guinea, Mali, Libya and Morocco. Through the efforts of Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia, representing the more conservative Monrovia Group of African states, and President Sékou Touré of Guinea, acting on behalf of the Casablanca Group, the leaders of 32 independent African states were brought together at Addis Ababa in May 1963. After two days of speeches, a charter creating the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) was approved on 25 May (Africa Liberation Day).
40. Plaatje, Thami K., 'The PAC in Exile', in South African Democracy Education Trust, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa Volume 2*, p. 746.
41. Box 35, 'The Sixth UK All-African Students Conference papers', in 'PAC London – Topical AAPRP 1982–89'. The conference was held on 2 December 1989.
42. Ibid.
43. Ibid.
44. Ibid. This was similar to Nkrumah's statement, which the A-APRP repeated in its literature. Nkrumah stated: 'All people of African descent, whether they live or were born in North or South America, the Caribbean, or in any other part of the world are Africans, and belong to the African Nation [...] the African revolutionary struggle is not an isolated one. It [...] forms part of the world socialist revolution.'
45. Box 35, 'PAC London – Topical A-APRP 1982–89'.
46. Ibid., Samora Sobukwe, A-APRP member to PAC headquarters, 2 June 1990.
47. Interview with Bini Brown, London, 24 March 2001.
48. Fitzgerald, Marian, *Black People and Party Politics in Britain* (London, 1987); Saggat, Shamit, *Race and Politics in Britain* (London, 1992); Saggat, Shamit (ed.), *Race and British Electoral Politics* (London, 1998); Shukra, Kalbir, *The Changing Pattern of Black Politics in Britain* (London, 1998); Werbner, Pnina, and Muhammad, Anwar (eds), *Black and Ethnic Leadership in Britain: The Cultural Dimensions of Political Action* (London, 1991).
49. Box 35, 'PAC London – Topical A-APRP', see, 'The Total Liberation and Unification of Africa'.

50. Interview with Marc Wadsworth, London, 7 October 2003. Sewell, Tony, *Black Tribunes* (London, 1992).
51. Shukra, Kalbir, *The Changing Pattern of Black Politics in Britain* (London, 1998), pp. 70–80.
52. Black organisations that formed Balsa were the Labour Party Black Sections, Africa Liberation Committee, African Dawn, African Families Resident in Camden, All Africa People's Revolutionary Party, Haringey Black Arts Forum, Black Consciousness Movement of Azania, Black People's Campaign for Justice, Ghana People's Solidarity Organisation, OBAALA, Pan-Africanist Congress of Azania. Box 35, 'PAC London – Topical, Black Action for the Liberation of South Africa', Box 38, 'PAC London, Topical – Grassroots Groups 1982 (90)', 'Proposal for a Declaration for Balsa put forward by Black Sections – Labour Party'.
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54. Ibid.
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57. Box 38, 'PAC London, Topical – Grassroots Groups', 'Proposal for a Declaration for Balsa put forward by Black Sections – Labour Party'.
58. Ibid.
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64. Within the context of Pan-Africanism, the name 'Azania' was used in 1958, and proposed as a replacement name for South Africa at the All-African People's Conference in Accra. Usage of the name among Pan-Africanists and revolutionary black radicals in the diaspora became popular in the late 1970s and began to appear in the names of groups such as the Azania People's Organisation and the Pan-Africanist Congress of Azania. Pan-Africanist groups in Britain appropriated the term, to counter the Europeanisation of South Africa.
65. Bod.MSS.AAM 856, 'The Black Agenda 1988', p. 39.
66. Ibid., p. 39.
67. Ibid., p. 40.
68. Ibid., p. 40.
69. This criticism was penned by Marc Wadsworth, Black Section activist and member of Balsa. Box 14, 'PAC London, correspondence – Labour Party 1980–86', 'Labour Party Black Sections paper on South Africa/Azania'. January 1986, p. 42.
70. Ibid., p. 40.

71. Interview with Lela Kogbara, London, 27 March 2002; interview with Marc Wadsworth, London, 7 October 2003.
72. Box 14, 'Labour Party Black Sections paper on South Africa/Azania' p. 40.
73. Ibid., p. 42.
74. Ibid., p. 42.
75. Box 38, 'PAC London, Topical – Grassroots Groups, Balsa', 'Minutes of meeting held on Friday 26 September 1986, St Matthew's Meeting Place'.
76. Interview with the member who wishes to remain anonymous. London, 27 March 2002.
77. Box 38, 'Balsa Minutes 26 September 1986'.
78. Ibid.
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80. Ibid., 'Balsa Minutes Nov 1986'.
81. Ibid., 'Balsa Minutes Feb 1987'.
82. Ibid., 'Balsa Minutes 28 Oct 1987'.
83. Ibid., 'Balsa Minutes 9 Feb 1987'. The rates for membership were £10 for organisations, £5 for individuals and 50p unwaged. In subsequent minutes it was noted that affiliated groups that had not paid their dues were the Africa Liberation Committee, Black Art Gallery, African Families, Black People's Campaign for Justice, and the Society of Black Lawyers.
84. Box 35, 'Balsa The National Coordinating Committee – General Proposals for Balsa's Constitution', 2 June 1988. These papers provide a full scope of the role of the Annual General Meeting (AGM), the Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM), the National Coordinating Committee (NCC), the National Executive Committee (NEC), the Branch Executive Committee (BEC) and the National Office (NO).
85. Box 38, 'Minutes of Balsa, 24 February 1991'.
86. Interview with Lela Kogbara, London, 27 March 2002. Attendance figures can be extrapolated from the listed names at the beginning of the minutes taken at each meeting.
87. Box 38, 'Balsa Minutes 28 Oct 1987'.
88. Ibid.
89. Former members seem not to be able to provide clarification on this point, and no details as yet have emerged from the archives.
90. Box 35, 'PAC London (Topical, Black Action for the Liberation of South Africa'.
91. Box 38, 'Balsa Minutes 9 Feb 1987'.
92. The event was held on 20 June 1987 at Lambeth Town Hall, south London.
93. Box 38, 'Balsa Minutes 29 Apr 1987'.
94. Ibid., 'Balsa Minutes 28 Oct 1987'.
95. Ibid., 'Balsa Minutes 29 Apr 1987'.
96. Ibid., 'Balsa Minutes 28 Nov 1987'.
97. Ibid.
98. Ibid., 'Balsa Minutes 12 Oct 1988'.
99. Ibid., 'Balsa Minutes 12 Oct 1988'.

100. Box 35, 'State of BALSA – Forward looking strategies – proposals'.
101. Box 38, 'BALSA Minutes, 24 Feb 1991'.
102. Ibid. It seems that at this meeting a few still harboured hope for a revival. An agenda for the next meeting was agreed along the lines of a discussion centred on the following questions, 1) What is a broad front? 2) What is a solidarity organisation? 3) Membership, organisation and individuals African and Asian. The proposed meeting seems never to have taken place.
103. Box 38, 'BALSA Minutes, 24 Feb 1991'.
104. Ibid.
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Chapter 7 Conclusion

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4. 'Witness Seminar: The AAM and the British Media', University of Sussex, 2004. Chaired by Professor Saul Dubow.
5. This insight was provided by contributions from Ethel De Keyser and Christabel Gurney, attending the witness seminar in 2004.

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Interviews

<i>Name</i>	<i>Title/position</i>	<i>Date of interview</i>
Politicians:		
Donald Anderson	Lord Anderson of Swansea, former MP	20 January 2005
Paul Boateng	Former High Commissioner to South Africa/MP	13 December 2002
Peter Carrington	Lord Carrington of Upton, former First Lord of the Admiralty/Foreign Secretary 1979–82	2 December 2004
Christopher Chataway	Former MP	15 November 2004
Geoffrey Howe	Lord Howe of Aberavon, former Secretary of State for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office 1983–9	8 December 2004
Robert Hughes	Lord Hughes of Woodside, former Labour MP, AAM Chair 1976–95	21 January 2004
Douglas Hurd	Lord Hurd of Westwell	1 December 2004
George Johannes	Former South African High Commissioner to Britain/ANC member	19 February 2002
Neil Kinnock	Lord Kinnock of Bedwellty, former leader of the opposition	January 2005
Herman Ouseley	Lord Ouseley of Peckham Rye, former head of the Commission of Racial Equality	18 December 2003
Bruce Pitt	Rt Hon.; lawyer; son of Lord David Pitt (deceased)	15 March 2003
Peter Price	Former MP/member of the European Parliament for London South East. Former member of ACP/EEC Assembly, a parliamentary body under the Lomé Convention, and played a leading role in discussions about South Africa with the 66 African, Caribbean and Pacific Association states	15 December 2003
Community activists:		
Ben Bousquet	Activist/author	27 May 2004
Trevor Carter	Activist/author	13 March 2001
John La Rose	Activist/author	15 March 2003
Sybil Phoenix	Activist/former nurse	15 May 2004
Spartacus 'R'	Activist	23 March 2001

William Trant	Activist/director of the West Indian Standing Conference	11 May 2005
Marc Wadsworth	Activist/former member of the Labour Party Black Section	7 October 2003
Journalists:		
Alex Pascal	Author/folklorist/journalist	30 September 2002
Trevor Phillips	Journalist, author/former head of Commission of Racial Equality (CRE)	7 May 2002
Onyekachi Wambu	Journalist/author	16 June 2002
Academics:		
Roger Fieldhouse	Professor	2004
Stuart Hall	Professor	13 June 2002
William Henry	Academic	22 February 2006
Winston James	Professor	13 March 2001
Political activists:		
Nicole Acebi	Former member of City Anti-Apartheid Movement	8 May 2002
Jocelyn Barrow	Dame, community activist	7 February 2004
Bini Brown	Community activist	24 March 2001
Christopher Childs	Former Labour Party adviser to Neil Kinnock and AAM trade union secretary	10 February 2005
Asquith Gibbs	Former local councillor/community activist	14 December 2004
Sharon Grant	Community activist, widow of Bernie Grant MP	27 April 2002
Christabel Gurney	Former AAM member/activist	30 April 2002
Lee Jasper	Activist, former Chair of National Black Caucus, former London mayoral adviser	10 October 2002
Buzz Johnson	Community activist/author	1 March 2003
Suresh Kamath	Former AAM/BEM member	14 July 2003
Chitra Karve	Former AAM/BEM member	10 April 2002
Ethel de Keyser	Former executive secretary of the AAM 1967–74. International Defence and Aid Fund member	3 March 2001
Lela Kogbara	Former AAM member	4 May 2002
Chris Lemet	Activist	13 April 2004
Lionel Morrison	Former head of Commission of Racial Equality	15 June 2004
Colin Prescod	Activist	23 April 2002
Russel Proffitt	Activist/local councillor	18 November 2003
Mike Terry	Former AAM vice-chair, 1972–5, executive secretary of AAM 1975–95	18 December 2000

Dan Thea	Former AAM, BEM member	20 December, 2004
Glenroy Watson	Former AAM, BEM member	1 February 2001
Authors:		
Vanley Burke	Author/photographer	16 October 2002
George Hallet	Author/photographer	16 October 2002
Linton Kwesi Johnson	Poet/author	15 May 2002
Ronald Segal	South African author/former journalist	19 March 2001
Benjamin Zephaniah	Author/poet	18 December 2003
Correspondents:		
Crispin Brentford	Lord Brentford of Newick	20 December 2004
Alan Brooks	Secretary of AAM, deputy executive secretary (1987– 91); editor of <i>Anti-Apartheid News</i> for two years, and on its editorial board intermittently 1967–87; research director of International Defence and Aid Fund	20 October 2002
Sir Frederick Catherwood	Former Conservative member of the European Parliament, 1979–94; vice-president of the European Parliament, 1989–92	19 November 2004
Robert Govender	Journalist	9 February 2005
Walter and Adelaine Hain	AAM activists	16 November 2004
Peter Hain	Rt Hon. MP for Neath, Wales	3 February 2005
David Owen	Lord Owen of Plymouth, former Labour Party member and founder of Social Democratic Party	15 November 2004
Robin Renwick	Lord Renwick of Clifton, former Ambassador to South Africa 1987–1991	14 December 2004
Ian Sinclair 1926–2007	Lord Gilmour of Craigmillar, former Conservative politician and Secretary of Defence in 1974, Lord Privy Seal from 1979–81	6 November 2004
Wilfred Wood	Rt Revd Dr; former Archbishop of Stepney	15 September 2004
Arif Ali	Journalist/publisher	14 September 2003
Dorothy Kuya	Community activist	7 October 2003
Richard Hart	Author/activist	5 October 2003
Kwame Kwei-Armagh	Playwright/actor	15 October 2004

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Figure 1 1977 'African Liberation Day March, Holy Road, Handsworth, Birmingham UK'. Man carrying banner 'Bury Imperialism in the fire of Black Unity'. Black community anti-racist protest marches with expressions of Pan-African and anti-apartheid solidarity. (Vanley Burke collection, Birmingham Library).

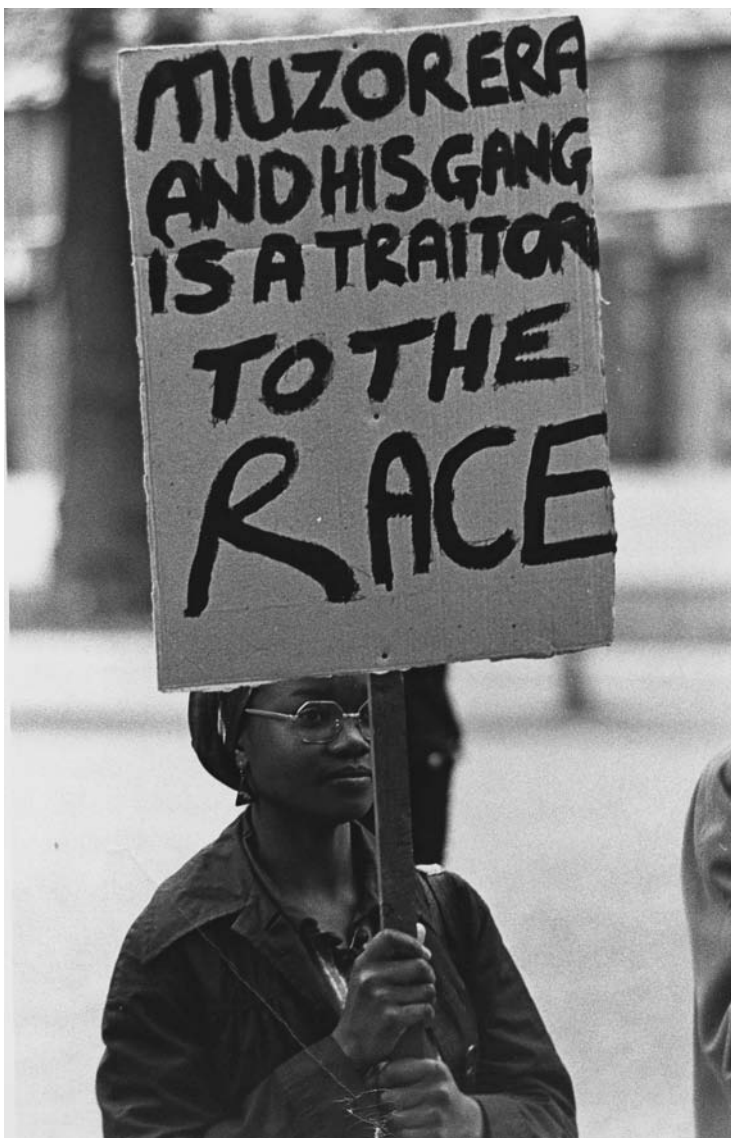


Figure 2 1970 Rhodesia Demonstration at Downing Street, London. Lady carrying banner, Muzorera and his Gang. Black community anti-racist protest marches with expressions of Pan-African and anti-apartheid solidarity. (Vanley Burke collection, Birmingham Library).



Figure 3 1980s Street Protest, 'To us Afrika is Home'. Black community anti-racist protest marches with expressions of Pan-African and anti-apartheid solidarity. (Vanley Burke collection, Birmingham Library).



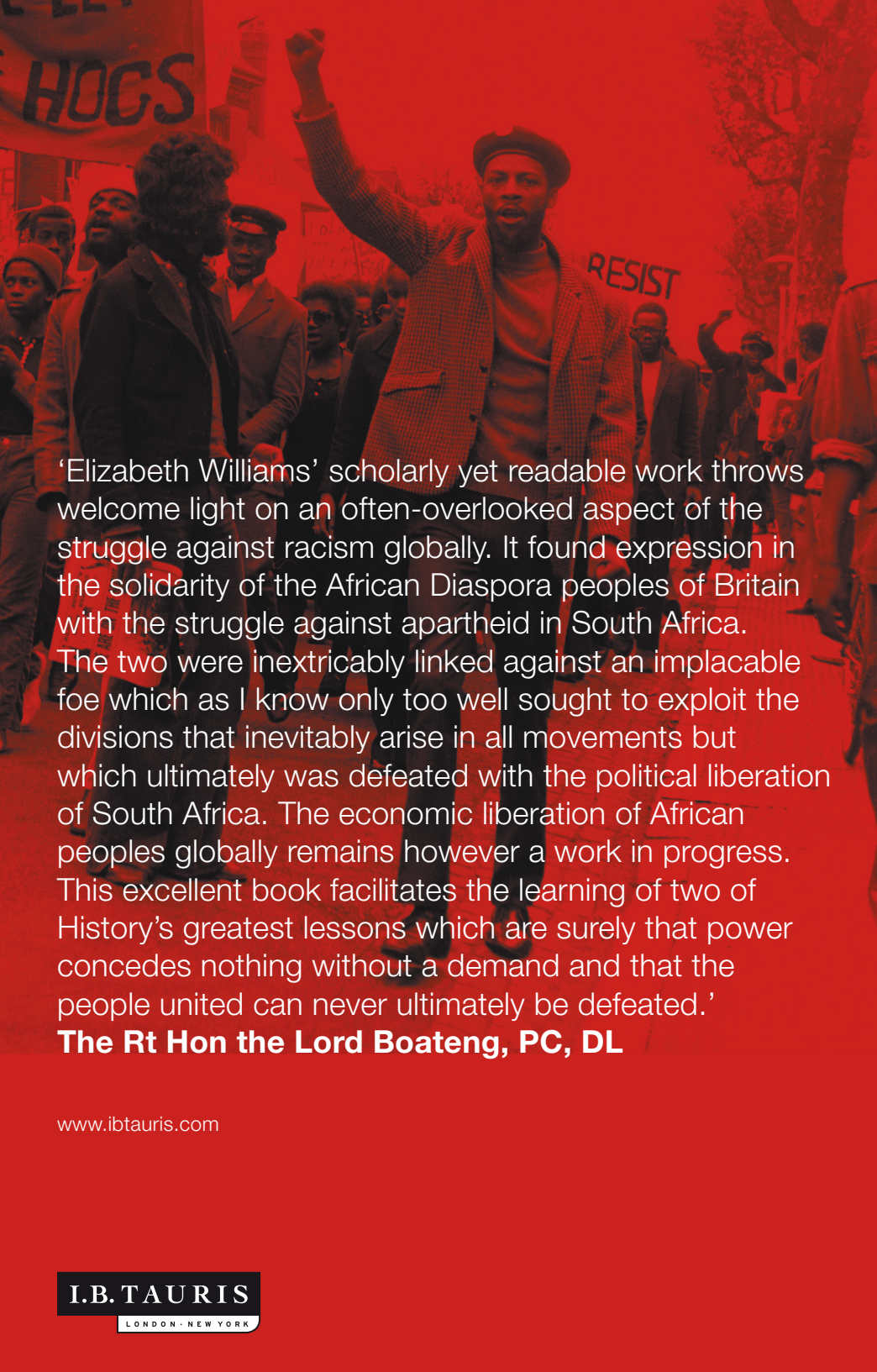
Figure 4 1970 Afro-Caribbean Self-Help Organisation march to Carrs Lane church for protest meeting against police brutality of Black people, City Centre, Birmingham, UK. Black community anti-racist protest marches with expressions of Pan-African and anti-apartheid solidarity. (Vanley Burke collection, Birmingham Library).



Figure 5 1979 African Liberation day March, Grove Lane, Handsworth Park Gate, Birmingham, UK. Crowd carrying banners 'Victory to the P.A.C' and more. Black community anti-racist protest marches with expressions of Pan-African and anti-apartheid solidarity. (Vanley Burke collection, Birmingham Library).



Figure 6 1980s MGCC Marcus Garvey Centenary speech. Black community anti-racist protest marches with expressions of Pan-African and anti-apartheid solidarity. (Vanley Burke collection, Birmingham Library).



‘Elizabeth Williams’ scholarly yet readable work throws welcome light on an often-overlooked aspect of the struggle against racism globally. It found expression in the solidarity of the African Diaspora peoples of Britain with the struggle against apartheid in South Africa. The two were inextricably linked against an implacable foe which as I know only too well sought to exploit the divisions that inevitably arise in all movements but which ultimately was defeated with the political liberation of South Africa. The economic liberation of African peoples globally remains however a work in progress. This excellent book facilitates the learning of two of History’s greatest lessons which are surely that power concedes nothing without a demand and that the people united can never ultimately be defeated.’

The Rt Hon the Lord Boateng, PC, DL

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